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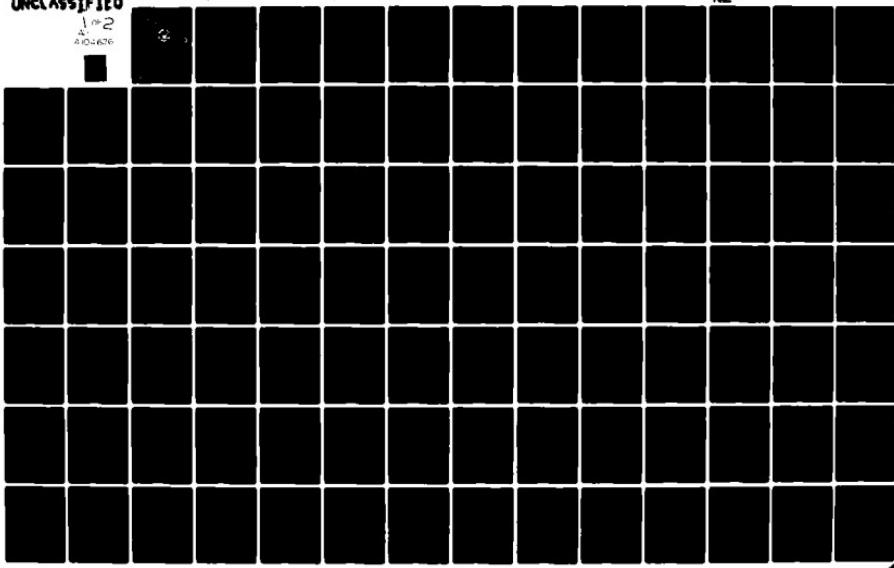
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SOVIET SUCCESSION 198? ;
CONTINUITY OR CHANGE

by

Theodore R. Milton, Jr.

June 1981

Thesis Advisor:

J. Valenta

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Soviet Succession 198? ;
Continuity or Change

by

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Captain, United States Army
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Since 1917 the Soviet Union has had only four top leaders--Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev--for an appreciable length of time. While each period of succession had unique features, many consistencies can be identified which point toward the existence of enduring power variables within the system. The communist party, the military, and the heavy industrial interests have evolved as the key means through which leaders and potential leaders gain their strength. No one can successfully rule the Soviet Union without the support of these interest groups. This thesis discusses the functioning of these interests during periods of transition in order to support projections about the future. Conclusions are then offered regarding implications for U.S. strategy, given the probability of generational change in the Soviet leadership in the near future.

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PREFACE

The research and writing of this paper were conducted and completed prior to the 26th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March 1981. As a result, information and insights gained from that event have not been considered. Additionally, the conference on Soviet Decision-making held at the Naval Postgraduate in the fall of 1980, while coming after the completion of this paper, served to reinforce and support certain hypotheses proffered herein. Through personal interviews and discussions during the course of that conference, substantive academic credence was lent to both the methodology and conclusions reached.

INTRODUCTION

With the Revolution, and likewise Soviet domestic politics now almost 63 years old, it is essential to the study to encapsulate the evolutionary trends. This is particularly important given the possibility that Brezhnev's health is such that he could die at almost any moment.¹ Additionally, it has become a given that the Soviet Union, in almost all categories, is a vastly different society and system than that inherited from Lenin in 1924.

Clearly, the most readily perceived systemic change can be easily described as societal and political maturization. In the 1920's, the forces operating within the system were channeled toward the most basic political and human element; survival. As a result, the responses to outside threats were designed to neutralize them as much as possible. Life threatening, in the political sense, circumstances were countered by programs, policies and techniques engineered, however crudely, to counter the threats and maintain, if not increase, the vitality of the system.

Stalin's packing of the party ranks with politically unsophisticated ruffians and his subsequent use of these groups at Party Congresses would be impossible within the Soviet political system today. Additionally, his drastic industrialization and collectivization programs paralleled by the generation of powerful coercive levers and the subsequent use

of those levers would be impossible to initiate within the system as it exists today. This is not to say that the society as a whole would not allow it, but that the Soviet elite would quash such extremism before it threatened their recently acquired political and social status.

While these rather diabolical aspects of the Soviet political scene have become extinct--or at least dominant--as operating variables within the present system, certain other variables, born during the same period of political immaturity, have flourished. The most significant systemic variable in the power equation has been the evolution of the party apparatus. Lenin developed the embryo of a disciplined party cadre with which to gain and maintain political control, but it was Stalin who codified the system and developed the smooth running "transmission belts" that came to control all aspects of Soviet economic and political life.

It was also Stalin who developed an economic model for the Soviet Union that has dogged it to the present and has skewed the resources of the society toward the development of powerful interest groups. That the military was a powerful political force from the outset is underscored by recalling its part in the revolution and the fact that it represented a major base of support for Trotsky. Stalin, by declaring that the policy of the country was directly linked with its heavy industrial capability, hence, its military strength, created a system bias. This bias translated into the coopting of the very best Soviet resources to that sector and created a

self-perpetuating preferred pattern for those resources that could only result in an extremely powerful political force. The extent of this force will be analyzed in depth later.

Finally, a certain political modus operandi that was first developed during the Lenin succession has been refined and nurtured into its present form. The first of these political facts of life is the existence and import of factionalism within the power elite. Although Lenin's political philosophy absolutely denied the existence of such a variable within the system, human ambitions and politics made differences inevitable. The key to success in Soviet politics seems to be to read the political wind and to always be aligned with the winning side.

The second evolutionary operational code deals with reactionism. Each new regime, i.e., the winning coalition, has initially pursued a series of policies designed to reverse the more "unsavory" programs of its predecessor. There are, to be sure, certain continuities that have not seriously been affected (at least in the long run) by these revisions. Clearly, however, "socialism in one country" was a reaction to the perceived danger to the system of the continuation of "world revolution" and the "new economic policy" as political programs. Also, quite obviously, the de-Stalinization program was a reaction to the threat posed by the continuation of political terror as a system variable. Finally, stability, sobriety and the maintenance of the status quo are the present reactionary

policies pursued as a consequence of the excesses to the Khrushchev era.

Under Khrushchev, many of the political and economic variables operative during the rise and consolidation of Stalin continued to be extremely important and distinctive in Soviet power politics. The Party, always a key element with respect to legitimacy and control, became more than a mere one-way "transmission belt." In particular the top organs of the Party enjoyed an increase in significance and were able to function, albeit with no minor amount of constraints, as an integral part of the decision-making operation. This is most clearly evident in Khrushchev's extraordinary use of the Central Committee in 1957.

As the fortunes of the Party as a viable political force grew under Khrushchev, so too did the power of the military-industrial complex. As we shall see, Malenkov chose the Soviet consumer as the group to protect in his early post-Stalin face-off with Khrushchev. Twenty-five years of Stalinism, however, had done little to enhance the position of the masses as a political force and had, in fact, drastically inhibited their growth in this area. Conversely, the same period had been marked by major advances in Soviet heavy industry and, as a result of the war, the military. These two elements of Soviet society had defeated the Hitlerites and saved Mother Russia; a fact that had significantly enhanced their political significance vis-à-vis all other groups. Khrushchev's initial

support for this combined force established a pattern for power consolidation that has remained to the present.

The Stalin succession did lead to a reduction in the status of one "power lever" that had significant implications. By the late 1930's, the secret police had evolved to a position within Soviet society such that they were perhaps the most powerful force within the system. That this power was coercive and threatening led to the unification of the opposition to the secret police following the death of its chief benefactor, Stalin. Although the KGB remains a powerful political variable within present Soviet society (as demonstrated by its representation in the Politburo), its significance has been reduced to that of a major contributing element to the larger military-industrial group.

The role of the government structure as a seat of political power was reduced following Stalin's death. Although it had never been an influential part of Soviet politics, Stalin had enhanced its position in relation to the party during the later stages of his regime. That Malenkov chose this base from which to launch his bid and failed in the attempt, greatly elevated the status of the party vis-à-vis the government. The political fortunes of Kosygin clearly suggest that this relationship has survived to the present.

By 1964, Soviet society and politics had matured to such an extent that Khrushchev's unsophisticated political style was intolerable. Significantly, this maturization was largely a result of Khrushchev's own initiatives but he failed to grow

with the rest of the system. Perhaps it was too much to expect from one whose formative years were spent under one of the crudest political systems imaginable. But just as Khrushchev had not developed, Brezhnev represented a new class of Soviet politician.

Typically, Brezhnev followed many of the established rules in consolidating his position. He pursued a policy line that reversed the excesses of the previous regime and supported the most influential interest groups. As a result, the role of the Party was enhanced still further, to the point that it is clearly predominant within the system. However, the rise of the party's political fortunes has not been accomplished without a price. Under Brezhnev's tutelage, there has been a decided increase in careerism that may significantly impact on the future policies and programs of the state. This careerism is additionally associated with the rising influence of the most powerful interest group in present day Soviet society, the military-industrial complex. The combination of career-oriented party professionals and the continued increase in the political power of the defense related constituency represents the single most important variable in the immediate Soviet domestic political future. It is from this group that the policies and programs of the 1980's and beyond will most likely be formulated.

Finally, system maturization has resulted in the establishment of oligarchy, or perhaps "limited personal rule," and the exclusion of dictatorship as a reasonable alternative.

Brezhnev's style as a consensus politician, coupled with the fact that he has survived and enhanced his own position, has provided an excellent model for future aspirants to the top position. This is particularly true in light of the fact that the last of the revolutionaries have long since passed from the Soviet political scene taking ideological dynamism with them.

I. THE LENINIST UNDERPINNING

Political succession in the Soviet Union is an historically unique phenomenon in that communism, the ideology and the practical application, have no precedent. Within Soviet communist society there are certain variables that have become distinguishable over time as being important factors that contribute to the power of the leadership. These variables seem to become highlighted during periods of leadership transition and therefore become more recognizable and verifiable. Through a comparative case study of past transition periods it is possible to determine the potential causal relationship between the various independent variables and the eventual outcome of the struggle. It is not the presumption of this study to categorically determine the exact relationship, but rather to suggest a loose conceptual framework within which to examine contemporary Soviet political dynamics.

In the 63 years that the Soviet Union has been in existence there have been a total of four individuals that have earned the title of dominant leader. Any study, even a cursory one, reveals several characteristics that have continued to surface as a feature of the men and their system. Perhaps the most significant and apparent are those characteristics of political pragmatism and unequivocal ruthlessness. These traits, noticeable in any successful politician, take on a uniqueness all their own in the Soviet system. A brief look at the first

succession in Soviet history, that of Lenin, may help in explaining this phenomenon.

Why Lenin? While this is an important question, it will not be sufficient to simply answer this one question as there are a variety of other variables surrounding the causes of communist rule in Russia. For that matter, one must also ask, why the revolution? The answer is both simple and complex.

The Romanov dynasty had been in serious difficulty for many years and had not displayed much introspection or desire to do so, as to the reasons for its sorry state. The 1905 Revolution would have, one would think, shaken even the most inane autocrat to take the steps necessary to save his head. Instead, a grand bluff, the Duma, was organized in a shallow attempt to fool the intelligentsia. With the Tsar in command of the army in the war against the Germans, and the Tsarina, under the influence of the absurd Rasputin, the game was finished. Just about all of the Russian intelligentsia had come to the conclusion that the old system must go and something new had to be instigated.¹ With that conclusion, both the problem and the solution were exposed.

For the grand dukes, the generals and admirals, the scholars and the intelligentsia, the need for a radical change was clear, but what form the change should take was clear only to one member of this group. To him, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin, the solution was crystal clear and had been for years. His solution was simply to win.

The fact that Lenin was a Marxist was important in terms of his succession and with respect to the legacy he left his country, but it was not the reason that he became the leader of the new Soviet state, nor has it been the reason for any successful Soviet political ascension. Lenin, as have been his successors, was a pure revolutionary pragmatist who found an ideology that justified his intuitive feelings about the state of Russian society in addition to "scientifically" proving that he would get what he wanted if he worked things right. When the revolution came, he was ready when no one else was even close.

As early as 1902 Lenin was concerning himself with the mechanics necessary to bring about a successful revolution. At that time he wrote, "...the organization of revolutionists must be comprised first and foremost of people whose profession is that of revolutionists...all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals, and certainly distinction of trade and professions, must be dropped. Such an organization must, of necessity, be not too extensive and as secret as possible."² The disorganized intellectuals that assumed control of the country following the Tsar's abdication never had a chance in the face of Lenin's highly disciplined, professional revolutionaries. But Lenin was not satisfied with a small, elite revolutionary Party for which "...outright military discipline (was) indispensable;"³ he demanded more of his followers, he demanded "democratic centralism." "The main principle of democratic centralism is that of the higher

cell being elected by the lower cell, the absolute binding force of all directives of a higher cell for a cell subordinate to it, and the existence of a commanding party centre (whose authority is) indisputable for all leaders in party life."⁴ With this tool, his own boundless energy and self-righteousness, and Marxist justification that enabled him to say that, "...everything that is done in the proletarian cause is honest,"⁵ he connived, manipulated and forced his way into the leadership of the revolution, which in turn ordained him with the single most important element, heretofore missing in the eyes of the majority of the populace, legitimacy. Unfortunately for his successors, the mantle of "revolutionary leader" could only apply to one man, and therefore the problem of legitimacy has dogged Soviet political leaders since. Additionally, Lenin's political legacy, with its crass opportunism, militaristic discipline, and sometimes blatant disregard for the masses has served to compound the problem of political legitimacy in a society of increasing, albeit regulated, literacy and political savvy. It was this very problem that concerned the five man Party Politburo in 1922 when Lenin suffered his first stroke and two years later, in January 1924, it was still unresolved.

Curiously, and although far from legitimate, it became clear that long before Lenin's death and at first without his apparent knowledge,"Russian society already lived under Stalin's rule, without being aware of the ruler's name. More strangely still, he was voted and moved into all his

positions of power by his rivals."⁶ From the standpoint of Soviet politics, particularly those concerning leadership succession, it is of paramount importance to analyze what this meant and how it came about.

From the standpoint of future comparisons it is important to trace Stalin's political biography after the revolution and parallel it with the evolution of Soviet political power and processes from the revolution to Lenin's death. A complete and clear appreciation of communist political institutions is essential to the understanding of the levers of power which must be manipulated during a successful political career. The significance of this is further underscored by the rather unsavory results should one pull a lever too hard and lose the struggle.

Perhaps the best and most complete description of the arrangement of early Soviet political institutions is offered by Isaac Deutscher:

From the beginning of the civil war the Politbureau acted as the party's brain and supreme authority although the party statutes contained no provision even for its existence. The annual congresses elected only a Central Committee which was endowed with the widest powers of determining policy and managing the organization and was accountable to the next congress. The Central Committee elected the Politbureau. At first, the Politbureau was to take decisions only on urgent matters arising during the weekly or fortnightly intervals between the sessions of the Central Committee. Then, as the scope of the affairs with which that Committee had to deal widened, including more and more of the business of government, and as the members of the Committee became increasingly absorbed in manifold departmental responsibilities and were often absent from Moscow, the Central Committee gradually and informally delegated

some of its prerogatives to the Politbureau. The Central Committee once consisted only of a dozen or so members; but then it became too big and cumbersome to act effectively. In 1922 it met only once in two months, while the members of the Politbureau worked in close day-to-day contact. In their work they adhered strictly to democratic procedure. Where differences of opinion were marked, they decided by a simple majority. It was within this framework, as *primus inter pares*, that Lenin exercised supreme power.⁷

Within this framework, Stalin was to hold three key positions directly following the civil war, which were to prove extremely beneficial from the standpoint of providing a political base of support and for the beginnings of his accumulation of power. These positions were the Commissar of Nationalities, the Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, and a member of the Politburo.⁸ It appears to be generally conceded that Stalin was able to directly benefit from these job assignments by his use of political appointments and the knowledge he gained concerning the innermost workings of the Party machine. But what is not clear is whether Stalin knew what he was doing from the outset or whether he learned through serendipity the extent of power that he could potentially realize. That Stalin was a realist and a pragmatist is unquestionable, but he was not considered a great intellect by his contemporaries within the Politburo and it was certainly not his ideological writings that enabled him to gain the leadership of the country. Perhaps it is explanation enough to say that he was the best politician of the group and as such intuitively felt the potentialities for

power aggrandizement that were placed in his hands by virtue of his political appointments. There are interesting repetitions of this theme throughout the history of Soviet politics, particularly in terms of leadership succession.

Regardless of whether the jobs made Stalin or Stalin made the jobs, his association with the Commissariat of the Nationalities enabled him to appoint a loyal political constituency in the hinterlands that would be absolutely essential later. His appointment as head of the Inspectorate was the next important phase of his education in machine politics and conversely, in the education by Stalin of the Soviet system of power processes.

Lenin had become dismayed by a traditional Russian institutional problem that had dogged that society for years--namely, the insidious appearance of the "petty bureaucrat." To counter this trend he instituted in 1919 the Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate to infiltrate and operate at every level of the government. Additionally, this reorganization was to exist totally without the normal governmental institutions acting as "a sort of super-government."⁹ The appointment of Stalin to head this organization is fascinating for it sheds some light on how he was viewed by Lenin at the time. Lenin was anything but politically naive and Stalin's appointment suggests that not only was Lenin confident in Stalin's ability to do the job, but that for all Stalin's aggressiveness, he was perhaps intellectually and politically unthreatening at this point. As we shall see,

Lenin drastically changed his mind later concerning Stalin's potential. What is most significant about the appointment, however, is what the direct benefits were to Stalin in terms of his continuing political education and the enlargement of his supportive constituency. The Inspectorate enabled him to become intimately familiar with the machinery of the new Soviet system that was developing, more familiar than Lenin himself, or anyone else for that matter. This co-development of the system and the man are essential in assessing the reasons for Stalin's rise to power.

But the Inspectorate was only one of the educational tools afforded Stalin. In addition, Stalin had been an original member of the Politburo whose operation was described earlier. Further, he was in charge of another seemingly secondary office, the Organization Bureau or Orgbureau. "At the...Eighth Party Congress the Organizational Bureau, likewise of five members (as the Politburo) was created. Its function was personnel work--the appointment and removal of Party members to and from jobs--with the approval of the Politburo. However, at the following Party Congress....the Orgburo was accorded the right to independently, without the sanction of the Politburo decide questions of an organizational character and questions of personnel...Stalin was the only original member of both."¹⁰ (Emphasis added.) That Stalin was appointed this duty seems again to underscore the managerial status that he represented rather than his political expertise. Furthermore, as Deutscher points out, "like none of his

colleagues, he was immersed in the party's daily drudgery and in all its kitchen cabals."¹¹ Just as the Inspectorate provided experience and education in the governmental structure and system, the job as head of the Orgburo provided the identical benefits in the Communist Party apparatus. As the Orgburo was responsible for all personnel appointments within the party, Stalin again was able to establish a responsive and loyal party constituency to coincide with that of the civil service and the nationalities. The potential for power aggrandizement is staggering for a lesser man, but for Stalin it is unbelievable. "At this stage his power was already formidable. Still more was to accrue to him from his appointment, on 3 April, 1922, to the post of General Secretary of the Central Committee."¹² It is, however, important to keep this appointment, and the other jobs he had held or presently held, in perspective with the times. Lenin was still alive and very much in control, and all of the jobs Stalin held were associated with the need for a good clerk or managerial technician. In Lenin's mind the party secretaryship was a technician's office...strictly an executor of the will of the Central Committee."¹³ Time had not eroded the importance if incisive ideological brilliance and it was this characteristic in which Lenin held such a commanding lead, that was considered the most important legitimizing aspect of Soviet leadership. After all, they were revolutionaries, not politicians, and any association as such would have been considered a liability. Unfortunately for Lenin and

the other members of the Politburo save Stalin, the lack of current Soviet political expertise at the expense of revolutionary fervor, turned out not to be the real liability.

On May 22, 1922 Lenin suffered his first stroke and although he was to recover briefly in the fall to return to some degree of active control, he was destined never to regain his former position of absolute control.¹⁴ From this day, the question of succession was first raised, if not immediately in the mind of Lenin, at least in those of his subordinates. From the outset, "the only conceivable succession to Lenin, temporarily ill or definitely removed, was a directory of the top Party leaders..."¹⁵ Hence, the stage was set for the beginnings of what has come to be known as "collective leadership" in the Soviet Union and the first, post-revolution factional dog fight among the top Party leadership. Modern Soviet politics was born in the ensuing years of struggle.

THE PRINCIPLES

In May, 1922 the top Soviet leadership, the Politburo, stood at seven full members and three candidates. The full members were; Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov and Thomsky. The candidate members were Bukharin, Kalinin and Molotov. Of these, Lenin was unquestionably primus inter pares but had by no means assumed the role of absolute dictator.¹⁶ The question of who came next on the power ladder is somewhat more blurred but as we have already

seen, Stalin had the inside track on the party and governmental system. However, in the world of 1922 Soviet Russia, Stalin, although holding in his hands what were to become the keys to leadership ascension, was not recognized by the masses and his contemporaries within the Politburo as a great revolutionary ideologue and leader. That symbolic title was clearly associated, after Lenin, with two men, Leon Trotsky and perhaps to a lesser extent, G. Zinoviev. "The withdrawal of Lenin at once threw into relief the potential rivalry between Trotsky and Zinoviev, the two most obvious candidates for the succession..."¹⁷ Unfortunately for Trotsky, he was perhaps more obvious than his immediate rival and therefore constituted the greatest threat to the others. This fact, the result of Trotsky's unparalleled success as head of the Red Army and his ideological genius, had won for him universal leader recognition within Soviet Russia.

But within the leadership, Trotsky depended and owed much of his support to Lenin, in much the same way that a designated heir apparent owes his position to his designator. With Lenin out of the active arena and the issue of his return at least in doubt, Trotsky appeared to be the one to beat in order to assume control of the reins of the government. The stage was set for the beginnings of an inter-party factional battle which was to establish the basis for the political parameters of winning and losing within the Soviet system for years to come.

Another problem concerning the succession of Lenin was directly related to Lenin's official position within the Party-State structure. Put quite simply, he had no all-encompassing official position or title (although he was Chairman of the Council of Commissars) and was the leader of the country simply because he was Lenin, the great hero and leader of the revolution. The problem, a recurrent one in Soviet succession politics, was which, Party or State, an ambitious individual should strive to gain control.

Zinoviev was the head of the Communist International and Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet. He was an impressive individual for a number of reasons. He has been described as "one of the revolution's giants" and as being "attracted by bold ideas." Additionally, he was a great orator and was said to have a "grip on the imagination of Russian crowds (that) was...demonic."¹⁸ He had been with Lenin from almost the beginning and therefore could lay claim to being a member of the "Old Guard." Unfortunately, Zinoviev had two handicaps in his bid for power. The first was his (and Kamenev's) well known opposition to Lenin in 1917 over the issue of the timing for the revolution, and the second and perhaps most damaging in terms of the dynamics of the situation in 1924 Russia was that "his will was weak, vacillating, and even cowardly."¹⁹

Kamenev led the Moscow Soviet, a powerful governmental position but a very weak base from which to spring into control of the entire country, even if he had been a man of such

ambition.²⁰ Trotsky held no position in the government, except Commissar of War, nor one of official responsibility within the Party apparatus. However, the fact that he was the head of the army and was additionally clearly identifiable as a potential Lenin successor provides the first indication of the role that the military could play in Soviet politics. This role has varied little in significance to the present.

In summary then, the juxtaposition of the principal contenders during the period leading to the so-called Triumvirate can be stated in the following manner. In 1923-1924, Kamenev chaired the meetings of the Politburo and the Council of Commissars. He was apparently not ambitious and was characterized by compliancy to the will of his oldest and closest ally, Zinoviev, who was the stronger of the two. Zinoviev, as head of the Comintern, saw himself as the main party theorist and "interpreter of Leninism" and therefore viewed his gravest threat as represented by Trotsky. Stalin's strength, what "little" it was at the time, was needed to help counter Trotsky.²¹ Thomsky and Rykov did not figure as contenders for Lenin's mantle, although Rykov held the seemingly important post of Deputy President of the Council of Commissars, or Lenin's officially designated second. AT least one source of the day characterized him, in fact, as Lenin's successor.²² Unfortunately for both Rykov and the American journalist who saw him as the new Russian leader, the reins of Soviet power

are not associated with the government bureaucracy of the country, but with the communist party. Interestingly, this lesson was to be relearned during the succession struggle of the 1950's.

Finally there was Trotsky, hero of the revolution and grand tactician and organizer of the Red Army; widely accepted in Russia as second only to Lenin in his intellect and his theoretical abilities. Trotsky who for all of this was simply not a politician. Particularly with respect to the definition that that term was to take in the Soviet context.

THE TACTICS

Although there are a number of variables associated with Stalin's rise to power in the 1920's, there are several which are significant in terms of this study as they have tended to reappear over time and therefore can perhaps be associated with what could be termed "traditional" Soviet succession politics. The first variable deals with the problem of political power within the Soviet system and how best to achieve it within the parameters of the communist party.

In 1922 Stalin was in the best position in terms of potential power by virtue of his unique experience within the system and his current duties as the General Secretary. This potential was not lost on him as he methodically began the appointment of regional and provincial party secretaries from the central party organization. His vocalized rationale for this "unfortunate" circumstance was both a lesson in Soviet

political realities and Stalinist logic. "It was time, he told the congress (12th Party Congress, April 1923), that provincial organizations elected their secretaries, instead of getting them appointed from above. Unfortunately, the lack of qualified men was so acute that local branches were all the time pestering the General Secretariat to send them people from the centre. It is difficult to train party leaders. This requires five, ten, or even more years."²³ Although Stalin was in the position of General Secretary prior to the death of the leader of the country, a situation which was to be totally unique to the Lenin succession, the lesson of a broad, loyal provincial constituency should not be disregarded. It is an absolutely essential element in the power equation of the Soviet Union.

This provincial power base was further strengthened by expanding the party membership. Stalin had to create a "popular" movement against Trotsky and the Oppositionists who were for the most part, intellectuals. To do this the party membership was filled (expanded) with "Politically inexperienced workers from the bench," who would support the Stalinists.²⁴ This support was operationalized at the 14th Party Congress in 1927 in the following manner. (The) tactic was the organized prevention of debate. The majority of the delegates, controlled by Stalin, behaved like an organized gang of hecklers, interrupting and shouting down speakers who attempted to criticize the policies of Stalin's Party machine.²⁵

It should be noted here, however, that the Party was "cleansed" of these types in 1929.

Through Stalin, control by the center of the periphery became more than a tactic, it became a political law of survival. Potential leaders in the future, however, would not have the benefit of years as General Secretary in order to establish their base but would have to have done a good deal of this beforehand.

Another variable which came into play during the Stalin succession was that of factionalism. It is significant to note here regarding this political phenomenon that Lenin, at the Tenth Party Congress, had formally outlawed the practice as well as the concept.²⁶ Factions could lead to the establishment of other political parties which were ideologically impossible for the communists. The Stalinist logic on this subject ran something like this; "minority rights to disagree with the majority and to persuade it to accept the views of the minority are unnecessary, since the majority is always right and the minority wrong."²⁷ Therefore, if a "majority" could be established there would be an end to all opposition. The period of Stalin's rise from 1923 to 1929, however, was laced with factional battles. What is interesting and important is that for the first time a "left" and "right" deviation within the Party were defined. That Stalin brilliantly manipulated the two extremes to his eventual benefit is significant only from the standpoint of studying him in the strategic sense. In any struggle for power, there are issues that represent

the contending factions. What makes communist power struggles unique and extremely difficult to analyze is the fact that they are, for the most part, carried on covertly so as to preserve the image of party unity. However, the degree of polarity and the viciousness of the struggle can be gauged by the amount of published material surrounding the differences. In the period following Lenin's death, there were a number of such indicators. For example, at the Twelfth Party Congress in April 1923, Stalin publically announced the existence of the Triumvirate.²⁸ These three were united for one purpose, to insure that Trotsky did not win the battle for Lenin's mantle. But here again, it is important not only to define the antagonists but to also define and understand the tactics.

By definition, the formation of political faction within a single party suggests that there are differences of opinion significant enough to risk splitting, and thereby, weakening the party. That there did exist these differences in 1923 in spite of Lenin's attempts to have it otherwise is significant not so much from the ideological issues that were at stake, but from the need to accumulate and be associated with power. Over the years, the issues would change but the force behind the division within the party would always center around the struggle for power. Additionally, the tactics employed by Stalin within the parameters of the factional battle are extremely important although they are perhaps intuitively obvious.

First, in 1924, Stalin immediately associated himself as the spokesman of "collective leadership."²⁹ It was obvious to him, as well as to the rest of his colleagues within the Politburo that Lenin, although a giant during his life, was now significantly larger than life in death. It would take time to establish that kind of credibility. In the meantime, the factional battles would serve the practical purpose of allowing the most prominent and charismatic members of the party to cancel each other out. The trick was to be left standing when all the rest had fallen. To do this, Stalin had to be extremely careful. "To foster the impression that he was the true apostle of Lenin,...he was obliged to straddle the fence. Fortunately for him, there was at first very little suspicion that he was capable of establishing a personal dictatorship."³⁰ The two most important personal assets that Stalin possessed at this point were his middle-of-the-road appearance and his apparent intellectual mediocrity. This, of course, from the standpoint of historical hindsight. He simply was not a considered threat, although Lenin had very accurately and astutely predicted otherwise.³¹ Unfortunately for the others, they did not or would not appreciate the political abilities and ambitions of the man.

So the factional battles began, Trotsky on one side and the triumvirs on the other. For Stalin the tactics were basic and commonsensical, "...at this stage, and even later, he was at pains to appear as the most moderate, sensible, and

conciliatory of the triumvirs. His criticisms of Trotsky were less offensive...he left his partners to go through the crudest form of mud-slinging, from which their own as well as Trotsky's prestige were bound to suffer."³² Additionally, and of the greatest significance for future Soviet politicians, Stalin recognized the need not only to be associated with the winning side of any debate, but also to engage in consensus politics. "He carefully followed the course of the debate to see which way the wind was blowing and invariably voted with the majority, unless he had assured his majority beforehand."³³ Finally and in the same vein, he followed another good, solid political tactic. "He instinctively abhorred the extreme viewpoints which then competed for the party's recognition. To the mass of hesitating members of the party, his words sounded like common sense itself."³⁴

The essence of the tactic was that Stalin was building his credibility, while the others were busily destroying theirs. Stalin was completely aware of the two essential ingredients necessary to assume Lenin's role, one was credibility and the other was legitimacy.

THE SEARCH FOR LEGITIMACY

"In January 1925 he (Stalin) at last brought Trotsky to resign from the Commissariat of War. After (he) had thus effaced himself, the only bond that kept the triumvirs together snapped."³⁵ Trotsky was broken, if not beaten and his position of "greatest threat" was enormously diminished.

Zinoviev and Kamenev had been the most vocal of the triumvirs and had suffered as a result of Trotsky's eloquence. Stalin was the steady and credible winner of the first round. But although his power was still further enhanced, he did not possess the all-encompassing charisma that would enable him to claim supremacy in the eyes of the party. To do this, it was necessary to associate himself as closely as possible as the direct disciple of the great Lenin. In this respect, "...the politics of the Lenin succession revolved to a significant extent around the question of revolutionary biography. Efforts were made to show that one had been 'with Lenin' and one's opponents 'against Lenin' at key points in the party history."³⁶ The tactic is important for several reasons in terms of Soviet succession.

First, as opposed to a western democracy in which the legitimacy of the leader is defined by the electorate, the legitimacy or illegitimacy of an aspiring Soviet leader is directly related to the status of his predecessor. In the Lenin succession, ideology and revolutionary fervor were of paramount importance and it was therefore necessary to establish the closest relationship possible with the originator of the "word". In this respect Trotsky had joined the party too late and for all his charisma and intellectual prowess he could not claim to have been there in the beginning. Zinoviev and Kamenev had opposed Lenin shortly before the revolution and could thereby be discredited. Only Stalin and

Bukharin had long, unbroken ties. Additionally, while Trotsky in his work, "On Lenin", clearly established Lenin as a great man, Stalin pursued a course in his literature that elevated Lenin much more to the position of a god, thereby elevating his own significance through association.³⁷ Interestingly, the converse of this tactic was to prove successful in the struggle for supremacy following Stalin's departure.

The variable of legitimacy, absolutely essential in the successful struggle for leadership succession, was therefore a product of association with the former leader whose status had not only remained high, but had in fact, increased after his departure.

The final variable which was associated with the problem of legitimacy was that of ideological interpretive excellence and the need to associate a unique and personally attributable inspiration to the dynamics of contemporary Soviet politics.³⁸ As Stephen Cohen suggests, "In 1925...there were five 'Himalayas', or what may be called 'authoritative' Leninist heirs. Each qualified by having some combination of four legitimizing credentials: (1) membership in Lenin's inner circle before and after 1917; (2) a revolutionary heroic biography, 1917 being the crucial touchstone; (3) stature as a revolutionary internationalist; (4) recognition as an 'outstanding Marxists,' which meant as a theorist. No oligarch's credentials were in perfect order."³⁹ Stalin was particularly weak in the last category and was, therefore, in need of strength through association. To accomplish this

he allied himself with Bukharin who, as Cohen further states, was considered to be, "...Bolshevism's greatest living Marxist, or, as he was officially heralded in 1926, the man 'now acknowledged as the most outstanding theorist of the Communist International."³⁹ The duumvirate of Stalin and Bukharin was, therefore, a powerful one with Stalin providing the brawn and Bukharin the brains. For Stalin, the key now was to again use the combined strength to destroy the credibility of the opposition (in this case the remaining three members of the Politburo) while at the same time becoming, at least in the minds of the rank-in-file party members, a true Marxist-Leninist theorist. This association was to prove beneficial for Stalin as he was to eventually base his entire legitimacy on an inspirational policy first outlined by Bukharin, i.e., "Socialism in One Country." Unfortunately for Bukharin, he was a far better economic theorist than a politician. Stalin, on the other hand, was quick to sense the commonsensical appeal of Bukharin's ideas while at the same time possessing the political wherewithall to orchestrate his own political fortunes and those of the country. Again, once those members of the Politburo whom Stalin considered a threat to his immediate future were discredited, or as in the case of Trotsky, were completely eliminated, there no longer existed a need for the alliance with Bukharin.

The Stalinist timing, not to mention the theft of the concept, was perfect. By 1926, the Party was in need of a concrete identifiable goal. The revolution was ten years

old and the prospects for internationalism had greatly diminished. Stalin, if nothing else, was a pragmatist and he saw an opportunity to finish off the opposition while at the same time associate himself with a winnable and popular cause. Economic success would confer ideological legitimacy, the missing ingredient. Given that he had established structural control of the apparatus by virtue of his position as General Secretary, and given that he was able therefore to control to a large extent the Party Congresses, his ideological platform had the support of the majority. In this case credibility contributed heavily to legitimacy. Additionally, he applied two other ingredients that were extremely helpful; Lenin and Leninism, and traditional Russian chauvinism.

In the first case, he manipulated Leninism to suit his own pragmatic needs in much the same way that Lenin had manipulated Marxism. In the final analysis, Stalin simply proceeded with a new and popular dogma that was rather weakly supported by misplaced Leninist quotes. The fact that it was so successful is directly related to the second ingredient mentioned, Russian chauvinism.

Stalin intuitively suspected, as perhaps Lenin had at Brest-Litovsk, that in order for communist power to survive in Russia, internal strength had to be built. To do this, all revolutionary fervor and energy had to be directed inward. Traditionally, Russian nationalism had retained a sort of byzantine mysticism among the masses which the international appeal of communism had somewhat distorted. The

key, therefore, was to lend communist ideological backing to the strong latent nationalism that was already a factor. At the Fifteenth Party Conference, Stalin supported his Russian socialism concept by revising some of Engels theoretical writings and by resorting to a useful degree of hyperbole by suggesting that if Engels were present he would emphatically exclaim, "To hell with all the old formulas, long live the victorious revolution in the USSR!"³⁹ The appeal of this tactic is obvious. Stalin portrayed Russia as the only truly progressive country in a hostile world. By creating an exterior threat while lending ideological legitimacy to the concept of internal strength, Stalin was able to unit a large cross-section of the country while elevating himself as the genius behind it all. By 1929, all of the opposition had been crushed and Stalin was hailed as "The Lenin of Today."

CONCLUSION

Factionalism, legitimacy, ideology, credibility were the independent variables around which the Lenin succession revolved. Although the significance attributed to each one would vary in successive cases, the basic variables would remain in power. The lessons to be learned from the political battles of the 1920's are directly associated with the unique nature of Russian political culture and Russian communism as it was engineered by Lenin. Clearly the stakes were high for, winning or losing was an all encompassing end. Soviet politics had been defined in classic zero-sum terms,

a situation which was to take on even greater significance in the years to come.

Stalin had defined the power levers to control within the Soviet system and had developed the tactics, in a general sense, with which to pursue political goals. The General Secretaryship of the party was now obviously more significant than the role originally assigned it by Lenin. Ideology, although perhaps never "pure" was something to be cleverly manipulated to fit the practical needs of the leadership. "Collective leadership" had been established as the legitimate transitional stage in the eyes of the general party membership and the political realities of factionalism and concensus building within that structure had been defined.

Unlike Lenin who built the political foundation of the new Soviet state but had not remained long enough to finish the complete structure, Stalin was to endure. Unfortunately, although the completed structure was to take on immense proportions, its appearance was to resemble a veritable gothic horror.

II. THE STALIN SUCCESSION

On April 12, 1945 at 4:35 P.M. (EST), President Franklin Roosevelt died of a cerebral hemorrhage. Less than two hours later, Vice-President Harry S. Truman took the oath of office and became the 32nd president of the United States.¹ President Truman requested that the present presidential cabinet remain and in the words of the New York Times the following day, "It was not long before the wheels of government began once more to turn."² From that day forth, at least for the next three years, there was no doubt that Harry S. Truman would be the president, barring, of course, another death. Mechanically, it was all very simple as it was explained in the Constitution and, in fact, had been done before and would be done again. For the Soviet Union it is not nearly so simple. Seven years later at 9:50 on the evening of March 5, 1953, Joseph Stalin was to die a similar death and, therefore, raise, again, the question of succession in the Soviet Union. However, at that point the similarity ends.

In the United States, news of Roosevelt's death was flashed across the country at 5:48 of the same day of his death, or a little over one hour from Roosevelt's death. In the Soviet Union, "Joseph Stalin had been dead for six hours and ten minutes before the Kremlin flag was lowered and the radio announced that the Dictator was no more."³ Additionally, the Party chiefs and the highest ranking members of the

Soviet Union met in a continuous session from the time of Stalin's death and announced shortly before midnight on 6 March that "...the most important task of the Party and the Government is to insure uninterrupted and correct leadership of the entire life of the country, which demands the greatest unity of leadership and the prevention of any kind of disorder and panic. In view of the above, it was necessary to make at once a sweeping series of changes in the personnel and organizational structure of the leading Party and government bodies."⁴ The stage was set for only the second leadership succession in Soviet history, but the pattern established more than twenty-five years earlier would still prove valid. Of course there were easily identifiable differences not the least of which was the fact that for the greater part of those twenty-five years Stalin had occupied a position, the like of which had only been acquired by Lenin after his death, and whose power had only been approximated by one other human being in the history of man, Adolf Hitler. The Soviet Union was the very definition of a totalitarian state and Joseph Stalin had become a dictator in every sense of the word. "With his death, his lieutenants were faced with the problem that in a dictatorship there is no legitimacy and no legal succession."⁵

THE PRINCIPLES

"No sooner had Stalin fallen ill than Beria started going around spewing hatred against him and mocking him. But...as

soon as Stalin showed signs of consciousness on his face and made us thing he might recover, Beria threw himself on his knees, seized Stalin's hand, and started kissing it. When Stalin lost consciousness again and closed his eyes, Beria stood up and spat. This was the real Beria--treacherous...."⁶

Thus, it appears from Khrushchev at least, that the battle lines for the coming struggle were being drawn even before Stalin had permanently passed from the scene. Beria was obviously the chief threat, just as Trotsky had been so in 1924, and in some ways the bases from which each was endowed with power were similar. Beria, as past head of secret police and that organization still being heavily populated by his supporters, had an enormous force equipped with the physical means of coercion to add a high degree of credibility to his bid for power. Trotsky had been the organizer and champion of the Red Army. But while Trotsky had apparently not wished to pull the physical coercion lever, Beria was quite prepared to use the power at his disposal in whatever way that benefitted him the most.

But while Beria was indeed powerful, he was well aware of the political liability that was also associated with his past position. He knew that he was not an acceptable candidate in the eyes of the party and state hierarchy and for this reason he sought support in those areas constituting his weaknesses. Malenkov represented just such a factor in the power equation.

On 7 March, after an extraordinary meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the initial power structure of the post-Stalin period was established. By virtue of this decision, Georgy Malenkov was appointed as Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and listed as First Secretary (General Secretary) of the Presidium (Politburo) of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Had it not been for the elevated status of the MVD, Malenkov would have held an enormous preponderance of the major power levers in his hands. As it was, however, the Duumvirate of Beria and Malenkov represented almost insurmountable power while at the same time posing the gravest threat.

It is also significant to consider that, "After World War II, Stalin had exercised his dictatorial power through government channels rather than the Party apparatus, primarily as Chairman of the Council of Ministers (i.e., Premier) of the Soviet Union."⁷ Therefore, on paper at least, Malenkov was the direct successor. But he as well as his colleagues in the Party Presidium knew this power to be hollow. The substance was provided through association with Beria.

The two quite clearly held a very threatening and overwhelming proportion of power, so much so that when a plenum of the Party Central Committee met on the fourteenth of March, an important alteration was made in the power structure. "To grant the request of Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, G.M. Malenkov, to be relieved of his duties as Secretary

of the Central Committee of the CPSU."⁸ In so stating, this left one man in the position of senior secretary of the Central Committee, Nikita Khrushchev.

"Khrushchev is outgoing, noisy, a drinker to excess, daring and aggressive. He exudes confidence, optimism, and energy."⁹ This was the man who inherited the position that had traditionally, if one case can establish a tradition, been the seat of power. Additionally, and for what makes for an interesting comparison of Stalin in 1923, "Almost all of Khrushchev's colleagues considered him to be hardworking but uninspired, therefore, hardly a political figure of national stature."¹⁰ Coincidentally it seems, Khrushchev was not considered a threat. In terms of a succession struggle in the Soviet Union, this attribute, if one can call it such, is extremely important particularly at the outset of the battle.

Additionally, Khrushchev was reputed to be an expert in an area which had been a constant source of embarrassment and strain on the economy. As the Medvedev brothers suggest, "one reason that Khrushchev got the post of First Secretary was that he had the reputation of being an expert on agricultural matters, and agriculture was the sector of the economy that was worst off..."¹¹ By pursuing this advantage, Khrushchev was to gain the reputation of "The Man Who Understands Agriculture" and was, therefore, to greatly enhance a very important aspect of any succession, credibility.¹²

But Khrushchev was much more than simply an expert on agriculture, he was truly a modern politician who literally stumped his way to the top in much the same was as his Western counterparts. Like Stalin however, Khrushchev understood the need to build a loyal party constituency which could be brought to bear in the event that the power struggle spilled over to that level. For unlike the 1920's, the Party Congresses had long since ceased to be of any political consequence. Power clearly resided at the top. The post-Stalin era was dynamic however, and Khrushchev was incisive enough, or so it would seem, to leave all the bridges intact.

Although there were several other important actors within the system that made up the post-Stalin power elite; Molotov, Bulganin, Mikoyan, these three were the most prominent and most politically active. Additionally, these three were to define the parameters around which the initial struggle would take place.

THE TACTICS

As has been mentioned earlier, a duumvirate consisting of Malenkov and Beria was initially formed which immediately took charge of policy formulation within the system. Predictably, however, due to the excessive threat which this relationship represented, an opposition quickly formed. If we are to believe Khrushchev, he was the engineer and driving force behind this opposition. His memoirs shed some interesting light on the nature of Soviet succession politics,

particularly with respect to the formation of political alliances. He first approached Malenkov in his drive to stop Beria and suggested that something had to be done or Beria would destroy them all. Malenkov's response, according to Khrushchev is extremely indicative of the nature of winning and losing political battles in the Soviet Union.

"You mean you want me to oppose him all by myself. I don't want to do that."¹³ The statement is clearly full of apprehension, if not pure fear. But Khrushchev did not mean for Malenkov to go it alone and he goes on to explain the exact tactics to be used.

What makes you think you'll be alone if you oppose him? There's you and me--that's already two of us. I'm sure Bulganin will agree. I've exchanged opinions with him more than once. I'm sure the others will join us if we put forward our argument from a firm Party position. The trouble is that you never give anyone a chance to speak at our Presidium sessions. As soon as Beria introduces a motion, you always jump immediately to support him, saying, "That's fine, Comrade Beria, a good motion. I'm for it. Any one opposed?" And you put it right to a vote. Give the rest of us a chance to express ourselves for once and you'll see what happens. Control yourself. Don't be so jumpy. You'll see you're not the only one who thinks the way you do. I'm convinced that many people are on our side against Beria. You and I put the agenda together, so let's include for discussion some matters on which we can mobilize the other Presidium members behind us and our resolutions will carry. Let's try it.¹⁴

The final result of the tactics so employed was the eventual defeat and arrest of Beria. Again if we are to believe Khrushchev he merely sought to expell Beria from the Presidium of the Party while it was Molotov who pressed for "more extreme measures."¹⁵

Aside from the covert construction of an anti-Beria faction and the use of this tactic to crush the most threatening initial opposition, there is a final tactical element that bears some consideration as it figures into the levers of power scenario.

As I have mentioned, Beria, although initially not in control of the Ministry of State Security, was the head of the newly constituted Ministry of Internal Affairs and as such held an enormous amount of physical coercive power in his hands. In order to take the "more extreme measures" alluded to by Molotov, it was necessary to find a counter-weight to this formidable power. The militard card as a political weapon was now played.

The account of the arrest of Beria is fascinating not only from a purely literary point of view but from the type of gangster politics that pervaded the Kremlin just 26 years ago.

"Still another question arose. Once we had formally resolved to strip Beria of his posts, who would actually detain him? The Presidium bodyguard was obedient to him. His Chekists would be sitting in the next room during the session, and Beria could easily order them to arrest us all and hold us in isolation. We would have been quite helpless because there was a sizable armed guard in the Kremlin. Therefore, we decided to enlist the help of the military."¹⁶ One immediately suspects Khrushchev of exaggeration here because once Beria had them arrested how would he have

reconciled the detention of the entire Party Presidium to the rest of the country? Stranger things appear to have happened in Stalinist Russia, so perhaps Khrushchev is sincere after all. More to the point, however, is the need to have established a good working rapport with the military hierarchy. The lesson was certainly not lost on Khrushchev who would use the military card again.

One final point with respect to Beria is that his arrest and subsequent execution marked a turning point in the politics of winning and losing. His death was to be the final use of such permanent tactics in the process of eliminating the opposition.

With the last vestiges of Stalinism removed, the tactics of factionalism seem to have taken on a secondary role to the search for political credibility, particularly regarding Khrushchev.

Unlike the 1920's, communist ideology was not the basis for the explosive inter-party factional battles that it had been during the Lenin succession. It was no longer as important for a prospective leader to be able to be the modern voice of Lenin in-so-far as "the revolution" was concerned. What was important was for an aspiring leader to associate himself with a popular domestic cause and prove that he was capable of solving the pressing problems of the day. Additionally, it was important for these programs to avoid threatening any of the vested interests associated with the

levers of power such as the military or the party aparatchiki. As mentioned earlier, Khrushchev had immediately associated himself with the agricultural issue for, "the condition of Soviet agriculture at this time (1953-54) was extremely bad, and Khrushchev frankly drew attention to these defects. The field was open for new policies...and the allocation for blame."¹⁷ His new policies were specifically designed to enhance both his popularity and his power, as for example his program for making the collective forms more politically aware. The technique was based on the mobilization of some 20,000 to 30,000 experienced Party members that were placed in control of key positions with the collective forms. Additionally, they were paid high salaries for the first two or three years.¹⁸ In this manner, Khrushchev was able to enhance his power base at the province level. Stalin had sought the same end through his centralized appointment of provincial secretaries. The techniques may have differed but the results were very nearly the same. It is important to also remember that Khrushchev had recently been the Moscow Party chief, a traditionally powerful and influential position. By strengthening his position at the periphery, Khrushchev expanded his potentially loyal and political constituency to contain two-thirds of what was important. Only the Leningrad oblast party machine was excluded.

Unlike Stalin, who methodically structured a political base before launching dynamic programs, Khrushchev, probably as a result of the nature of the man, saw his road to success

as being associated with spectacular and innovative policies. Throughout his entire tenure as First Secretary of the Party, he was constantly indulging in extraordinary reorganizations which were initially, at least, to label him as a decisive man of action. The Virgin Lands program was the first and perhaps the most significant both in terms of its success and failure. For pure dynamism, however, the Secret Speech of the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956 was a critical gamble that clearly had an initially positive impact on his bid for power and credibility.

Parallel to Khrushchev's personal attempts to establish political credibility, was his need to rid the path to the top of any and all obstacles. It was certainly important to establish a broad constituency throughout the country, but equally important it was necessary to deal with the most direct and dangerous threats from one's colleagues.

After the fall of Beria, the two most obvious contenders were Khrushchev in his position as First Secretary of the Party, and Malenkov as Premier. As I mentioned earlier, it was (and most assuredly is) politically wise to clearly understand the sources of power and to select programs and issues to support which do not threaten these power sources. Malenkov apparently misunderstood the variables associated with political power in the Soviet Union.

With Khrushchev the champion of agriculture, and evidently gaining enormous popularity and support from his programs in this area, Malenkov needed a countervailing strategy.

Traditionally, the Soviet consumer had suffered as a result of the emphasis placed on heavy industry. In the post-Stalin euphoria, Malenkov apparently felt that by appealing to the Soviet consumer through a program designed to develop light industry, he could translate the popularity of such a program into political currency. There are two important flaws in the logic of such an approach.

First, because under Stalin, Soviet heavy industry had been developing for almost twenty-five years, it had been a traditional source of pride and its accomplishments had been constantly proclaimed at every opportunity. Khrushchev, for one, was quick to remind the Party of these successes. "The communist Party has steadily maintained a course of overall development in heavy industry as essential to the successful development of all branches of the national economy, and it has achieved great success on this road. Our best cadres were occupied with the work of industrializing the country. (This kind of statement was bound to enhance his support among this group even more.) We have a mighty industrial base..."¹⁹

Second, not only were the vested interests of the "best cadres" threatened, but because heavy industry is essentially the backbone of the defense interests of any industrialized society, the military was also threatened. As I have mentioned earlier, the political role of the military had been enhanced in the immediate post-Stalin period and to formally propose a program which could only weaken this group was not

a constructive approach to take. "By January 1955 it was evident that his policy was opposed by...a great majority of the Presidium. At the same time such evidence as there is implies that Army thought was against him too."²⁰

What is important to remember about this issue is not that it was simply an argument concerning the important economic issues of the time but that, "the heavy industry issue...seems to have been more a dispute on a point of doctrine, convenient for allegations of deviation, than a major matter of policy."²¹ Just as the ideological issues of the Lenin succession had been more a tactic for dividing and discrediting the opposition, the economic issues of 1954-55 served the same purposes.

Another tactic that was employed by Khrushchev in his quest for credibility as the Stalin successor was his new role in foreign policy. Khrushchev was clearly endowed with a high degree of political astuteness in that he obviously sensed that successful foreign policy initiatives would greatly enhance his domestic stature and lend an enormous degree of legitimacy to his quest for the position as Stalin's successor. With Malenkov finished off by virtue of the heavy versus light industry issue, and Khrushchev's prestige and power increasing exponentially as a result of his agriculture and cadres policies, his only remaining obstacle lay in the form of further reducing the stature of any and all potential rivals. As Molotov enjoyed the political stature of a long time association with the very pinnacle of Soviet leadership

and as he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the opposition was clearly delineated. To discredit Molotov, Khrushchev used the Tito reconciliation and Molotov's historical position on that issue as a weapon against him.²² By the summer of 1955 the tactic to discredit the opposition was clearly beginning to work, but Khrushchev still needed some enormous victory to solidify his power. The Twentieth Party Congress was due to meet in February, 1956.

In addition to Khrushchev's agricultural and foreign policy initiatives and in order to convey the image of legitimacy necessary for him to assume the leading role in Soviet politics, he had also been methodically pursuing an old Stalinist tactic. "By the (20th) Party Congress (the new Secretariat) had increased the number owing their positions directly to Khrushchev to about two-fifths of the senior provincial secretaries."²³ Although as I have mentioned, the congresses did not occupy the same status as they had in the 1920's, it was important for Khrushchev to have as much support as possible at this particular congress. The gamble that he evidently felt he needed to solidify his power would be taken at that event.

That the Secret Speech was an enormous gamble may at first appear to be intuitively obvious. However, what seems to be the most important element surrounding the issue is not so much the content of the speech, but who gave it. As we have seen throughout the discussion of succession politics, one of the most essential and basic tactics used is the

isolation and discrediting of the opposition. Khrushchev was gaining power, that was evident. As a result, he was rapidly coming to exemplify the most significant threat. No one understood the significance of his position better than Khrushchev himself and, therefore, he was forced by the laws of political survival with the need to confront and discredit his opponents as firmly as possible. As he states in his memoirs, when he suggested that he give the speech, the other members of the Presidium argued that he should not because they would all be implicated.²⁴ This was obviously true, but Khrushchev clearly gambled that by virtue of the fact that he would deliver the speech, he would appear as the leader of moderation and honesty, in fact a martyr, while the position of the others would be greatly weakened. The tactic worked and "within the Soviet Union the speech was hailed by most of the intelligentsia and Khrushchev became enormously popular."²⁵ Coupled with this victory, the Virgin Lands project was a huge success in the summer of 1956. "The yield of wheat was unprecedented in the history of Soviet agriculture."²⁶ Clearly, in 1956 Khrushchev had achieved a high degree of legitimacy through his economic successes and his association with a popular doctrine, de-Stalinization.

But Khrushchev had not completed the important task of eliminating all of the opposition. Although Malenkov had been removed from the Premiership, and Molotov had been discredited over the Yugoslav issue, they remained as part

of the governmental structure. Just as Stalin had to completely rid himself of Trotsky, Khrushchev could not solidify his position as long as they remained. Without a detailed description of the mechanics surrounding the emergence and subsequent destruction of the anti-Party Group, it should be sufficient merely to explain the reasons for its formation and eventual demise.

True to Soviet political form, emergence of a threat in terms of potential power aggrandizement resulted in the polarization of the opposition. By the fall of 1956, Khruschev's successes had won for him the position of greatest threat. The result was that..."Malenkov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov and Molotov openly opposed the new course (particularly that) of de-Stalinization."²⁷ By all rights it is fairly amazing that Khrushchev was able to survive this factional power play against him. It is significant that his understanding of the sources of power within the system was such that his cultivation of the military through the person of Zhukov was the source of enough counterforce to assure victory. By 1957 the military was such an enormous political force that its backing was instrumental to achievement of the ultimate power position.²⁸ Again, as one might expect, however, such power constituted a threat that must be eliminated. "In time, he (Zhukov) assumed so much power that it began to worry the leadership."²⁹ Although Khrushchev suggests that all of the members of the Presidium were concerned with Zhukov's

rising power, it is considerably more likely that the concern was largely Khrushchev's. Since the political indoctrination of the military during the Beria arrest and the anti-party intrigue, there was an authentic possibility, at least in Khrushchev's mind, that Zhukov and others were quite capable of engineering a military coup. In any event, Khrushchev was not prepared to prolong the issue and Zhukov was dismissed as Minister of Defense.

Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich and Zhukov were gone. Agricultural problems had taken a definite positive turn, and Khrushchev's prestige and political support were steadily increasing. The final step was taken in 1958. "After Bulganin's exit from the political arena in 1958, Khrushchev, now Chairman of the Council of Ministers as well as First Secretary, became in effect a dictator, enjoying total power not by employing the methods of terror but rather by appointing to key posts in the Party structure, the Council of Ministers and the Army, people whose careers he personally had advanced at one time or another."³⁰ One of those people, of course, was Leonid Brezhnev.

SUMMARY

It is perhaps useful at this point to summarize Stalinist and Khrushchevian political tactics in an effort to establish points of similarity between the two cases. There are clearly certain variables associated with political power within the Soviet system and there are apparent techniques

which have been more or less standard in terms of power aggrandizement.

First, the role of the Communist Party seems to be unchallengeable as the source of the most consistent and manageable power base. This is apparently true regardless of the stature achieved by other organizations and individuals. The Party offers the only source whereby power, and with it legitimacy, may be translated from the system to the individual. The Party, in fact, occupies the position of the voter public in western democracies. Apparently, at least from the perspective of the Lenin and Stalin succession, manipulation of the party cadres in such a manner as to create a majority of individuals owing political careers to the central machine is a necessary step. This step, however, may not be required as an initial phase, but only as a process that must be accomplished in order to maintain power. (In this case power being defined as the ability to successfully pursue personal programs and policies within the system). Additionally, the Party power base seems to be further divisible into thirds; the Moscow and Leningrad machines, and the cadres of the provinces. Obviously, then, the key position to achieve this allegiance is that of senior (first) secretary of the CPSU.

Second, the support of the military appears to have resulted in important political currency, although its usefulness apparently depends on several other factors. This political support is derived largely from the fact that the

military possesses large physical means of coercion and that it represents the only organization outside of the Party that is unified and disciplined. As the role of the secret police has traditionally been strong, the military, as we have seen in the Beria case, can act as an important counter-weight.

Finally, for all the public assurances to the contrary, there are quite clearly political deviations within the party that erupt into full blown factions. To be sure, factionalism is perhaps more an indicator of the political climate than an independent variable with a causal link to political succession. What is clear, however, is that it constitutes a political reality of the Soviet system that takes on particular significance with the loss of the unifying force of the leader. Factional alignment determines the political makeup of the system as it must result in the emergence of one group over another. By definition, declared factions cannot exist and, therefore, it is imperative to unequivocably discredit an opposing force both to purge the system of potential threats and to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the party members. Additionally, it is within the parameters of the factional battles that the role of communist ideology has been relegated. Clearly, one's credibility and legitimacy may be greatly enhanced as a result of incisive manipulation of the ideology to "prove" the erroneousness of the opposing view. It is extremely difficult to assign the label of any Soviet

leader, including Lenin, with that of "dedicated Marxist." Pragmatism, in the traditional political sense seems clearly to be paramount.

III. WINNING AND LOSING, KHRUSHCHEV STYLE

If, as the Medvedev brothers suggest, Khrushchev was a dictator in 1958 (or if he was only in the position of primus inter pares as I have suggested), then how is it that he was ousted in 1964? The answer, at least for the year 1964, was that Brezhnev did not win, Khrushchev lost. For the first time in the relatively short history of the Soviet Union, the country's top political figure had left that position standing up. The factors surrounding that unique occurrence and the subsequent rise of his appointed successor, have as much to do with Khrushchev's political infelicities as with Brezhnev's astuteness.

Before delineating the series of crucial errors that were apparently responsible in whole or in part for the ouster, it is important to review two models of political behavior that have been associated at various times with Soviet politics. These models have been described by Carl Linden as the "totalitarian model" and the "conflict model."¹ In short, "the totalitarian model of Soviet politics assumes that power is stable and undivided once a new leader has firmly succeeded to the top position in the Communist Party." The conflict model on the other hand, presumes the continuance of factional in-fighting "...behind the facade of Communist Party discipline."² Because we have the benefit of historical insight regarding the Khrushchev years and because the evidence has

continued to support the conflict model of Soviet politics to the present, it is a much more pervasive argument to picture Khrushchev as constantly scrambling to shore up his defenses against his rivals. This is particularly true in light of the role of the traditional sources of political power as outlined earlier, and Khrushchev's treatment of them.

"In 1959, Khrushchev was undoubtedly at the pinnacle of his power. He had successfully routed the anti-party group, ...defeated an incipient Bonapartist threat by purging Marshall Zhukov,...(and) he replaced Bulganin as Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers..."³ While this statement of Khrushchev's political gains may be indicative of his power within the official Soviet hierarchy, it is possible that even before that year he had begun a rather systematic burning of his political bridges to the sources of power and influence.

THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Just as Stalin had assumed the platform of his defeated opponents, so Khrushchev took up the banner of consumerism that had proven such a liability to Malenkov. In May 1958, Khrushchev unveiled a new economic program which called for the rapid expansion of the chemicals industry.⁴ Admittedly, he was wiley enough to couch his new policy in terms that were designed to obscure, as much as possible, the change in emphasis. Unfortunately, his assertion "that chemicals

(were) now the 'decisive' branch of heavy industry" did not hide the fact that the traditional emphasis on steel was being supplanted. It may be significant to suggest here that in a bureaucratic system such as the Soviet one, rising up the hierarchical ladder depends in large part on an individual's career pattern. Clearly since 1930, the place to be had been on the heavy industrial side of the economy where emphasis from above, and relative ease of quota fulfillment had been the hallmark. Khrushchev's plan, therefore, stuck hardest at those individuals who had displayed the most ambition and who had the most to lose. Politically, it appears intuitively obvious that one would not wish to alienate such an important constituency. Stalin had survived the alienation of the kulaks by simply exterminating them and replacing them with something else. Khrushchev could not employ this method and, therefore, antagonized a powerful interest group at no one's expense but his own. The evidence that Linden uncovers supporting the dangerous conflicting attitudes that were openly expressed against the new program are indicative of two factors. One, that Khrushchev was not an all-powerful dictator as is perhaps suggested by the Medvedev brothers and, two, that Khrushchev apparently did not appreciate the limits of his own power and the bases from which that power was derived. An article published in the military journal "Red Star" following the announced new program is illustrative of the antagonisms:

To whom is it not clear that enormous harm to our state would occur if, instead of being stepped up, the tempos of further development of industry--including heavy industry--and the material basis of the economic might and defence capability of the country were weakened? ...Thanks to the fact that the possibilities of the socialist economy have grown and above all to heavy industry, and to the achievements of Soviet science and technology, our armies...are supplied with the latest military equipment and arms which are the material basis of the Soviet Union's armed forces.⁵

However, as if it were not enough to directly threaten the civilian side of the military-industrial complex, Khrushchev proceeded in systematically severing important ties with the military half of the interest group. As early as January, 1958, he had begun engineering the organized reduction of the military forces. In May of the same year, Marshall Malinovsky was to announce at a Victory Day celebration that the 300,000 man demobilization was completed.⁶ But further along in the speech the message conveyed by Malinovsky was one of caution against further such actions. He warned that there were still forces in the capitalist world which wanted to make profits out of war and who, like Hitler, dreamed of world domination.⁷

Khrushchev, while perhaps overconfident of his own power, was not entirely naive. He recognized the need to tone down the nature of the international threat in order to make his new programs and policies more acceptable. Hence, the September 1959 Camp David Accords. By reducing the level of the most significant international threat, Khrushchev felt

sufficiently secure to proceed in his domestic initiatives which were to seriously undermine his military connection. "The demobilization measures announced by Khrushchev at the beginning of January 1960 undoubtedly caused serious discontent in the armed forces. Within two years, 1960 and 1961, 1,200,000 men including 250,000 officers, generals and admirals, were to be discharged."⁸ This is an absolutely fascinating policy for a man who had relied so heavily on that very constituency in his leadership crisis just three years prior.

As if the military demobilization plan had not succeeded by itself in seriously jeopardizing Khrushchev's political balance, the U-2 crisis of May 1960 must surely have convinced the waiverers. As Michel Tatu clearly points out by citing a May 23, 1960 "Pravda" article, Khrushchev was under rather open attack. "Unlike certain simple-minded persons, we were not exactly moved to enthusiasm by the President's foggy, evasive statements."⁹ It is very difficult to imagine a similar statement being written following the Potsdam Conference, for instance. Khrushchev had quite clearly caused a shift of the power balance away from his favor, at least so far as this powerful interest group was concerned. However, as if the original reduction were not threatening enough to the military leadership, particularly following the U-2 affair, Khrushchev further aggravated the situation and ignored all of the danger signals. On May 7, 1960 he stated, "This U-2 affair should not induce us to revise our

plans so as to increase our appropriations for armaments and the armed forces, or to stop the cutback in military strength."¹⁰ Then two days later he went even further by saying, "When we have brought our armed forces down to 2,400,000 men some time will elapse, after which, in all likelihood, we shall go on reducing their number."¹¹

THE APPARATUS

If, as has been suggested, Khrushchev made some grave errors concerning the military-industrial interest group, perhaps his most serious mistakes were associated with the single most powerful group within the system, the Party. In both the Lenin and Stalin succession, the key seems to have been the strong support generated by the Party for the eventual successor. Khrushchev clearly appealed to this group in the early stages of his struggle for power just as he had sought the support of the military and heavy industrialists. But in 1962 he announced a program which went a considerable way in destroying this power base.

As the Medvedev brothers outline, there were two intra-party structural changes that seemed to severely damage Khrushchev's credibility within this important constituency. The first concerned the election of new party committee members. "Under the new rules, applicable to governing Party bodies (i.e., raion and oblast committees, and even the Central Committee itself), it became mandatory for one-third of the members of each committee to be replaced by new Party

workers at the next election."¹² This new statute was completely supportable in theory but political suicide in practice. Given that the success or failure of all party programs and policies is highly dependent upon the degree of support generated from within the rank-and-file party apparatchik at the organizational level, the new rule seriously undermined enthusiasm by creating a high degree of insecurity among the apparatchik. Hence, those individuals who had, heretofore, been numbered among Khrushchev's strongest supporters, and without whom he would not have achieved the degree of power which he enjoyed at the moment, were not inclined to further support him. Additionally, the issue was becoming particularly critical in the near future as one-third of the CC of the CPSU was to be replaced in 1965.

The second policy, but by no means less significant in its impact, was the splitting of all oblast-level Party committees into industrial and agricultural sectors.¹³ The result was that, whereas in the past the oblast first secretary had been the single most powerful individual governing all aspects of his oblast, there now were two individuals who, at least in theory, shared responsibility. The consequence was the creation of a "duality of interests"¹⁴ between agriculture and industry, and the alienation of some of the most powerful individuals within the system and the exacerbation of an already inefficient economic system.

The significance of the Party reform is dramatically illustrated by Yaroslav Bilinsky in his analysis of the

Party organization of Gorky province before and after the reform.

Before November 1962 the Gorky obkom had jurisdiction over 12 city committees, 6 urban and 48 rural district committees, and a total of 4,300 primary Party organizations. After the split, the Gorky industrial obkom supervised 18 city committees, 6 urban district committees and the Party committee of the Volga shipping line. Altogether it had jurisdiction over 2416 primary organizations with more than 126,000 members. The Gorky agricultural obkom assumed control over 18 kolkhoz-sovkhoz production administration Party committees, the Party committees of the provincial agricultural organizations and enterprises, with a total of 1614 primary organizations and 44,000 members.¹⁵

That Khrushchev's motives were sincere is not in question but his apparent lack of concern for the political ramifications that such a policy would generate does support the thesis that he was anxiously seeking a political coup to silence the dissenters at the expense of a careful analysis of all aspects of the problem.

There were other policies that further undermined his support within the Party apparatus such as the reduction of special bonuses for party officials and of such perquisites as chauffeur driven cars for certain Party officials.¹⁶ In a society where liquid assets are not nearly as important as personal prestige and position in terms of the quality of life, this kind of program could do nothing but create ill feelings toward its perpetrator. This is, of course, not to suggest that monetary remuneration is of no consequence to the professional party worker although Khrushchev apparently decided that that was the case. As Bilinsky illustrates, Khrushchev had instituted a systematic reduction in

the roles of the paid Party staffs, substituting for them unpaid voluntary activists.¹⁷ Again, the efficiency and political astuteness of these measures is extremely questionable. Not all communists shared Khrushchev's enthusiasm for the greater cause.

Finally, Khrushchev further isolated himself from the Party/state hierarchy by relying on advisors who had no official Party role. This circumvention of the bureaucratic hierarchy quite obviously caused ill feelings and while it may have been an effective tool in defeating his rivals prior to 1957, it rapidly became a liability.

Just as Khrushchev was pursuing a course that appeared destined to shatter the very foundations of his power, he suffered major policy setbacks that would have severely tested an even firmer structure. The Cuban fiasco was guaranteed to conflict with the unilateral reduction of forces ordered by Khrushchev and it quite clearly served to further intensify the instability of the military connection. In the domestic sphere the drastic mistakes of 1962 involving the restrictions placed on private plots and the abandonment of the practice of letting land lie fallow in the summer, "transformed the minor drought of 1963 into a serious national agricultural disaster."¹⁸

These setbacks on the foreign and domestic scene coupled with Khrushchev's apparent unwillingness to preserve his political balance in those traditional sources of power placed his future, and the perceived future of the entire

nation in grave jeopardy in the eyes of his opponents. Khrushchev had come to occupy the position of greatest threat and in Soviet succession politics, the unification of the varied interests allied against the threat had become the approved solution.

What is different about the power struggle that was developing within the Soviet hierarchy in 1962 is analogous to the runner who takes a commanding lead at the beginning of a race and is so enamored by his position that he thinks the cheers of the crowd are for him when they are for his opponent who is rapidly gaining on him. Whereas, Trotsky had displayed a decided lack of ambition and political savvy in his struggle with Stalin, and Malenkov was simply incapable of launching a successful bid due in part to the nature of the political liabilities he inherited and in part to incompetence, Khrushchev had succeeded, at least in his own mind. The problem, however, was that he seemed unable to clearly identify the parameters of his power or to accept the fact that he was not a "vozhd" but merely primus inter pares.

As economic and foreign policy initiatives met with failure, Khrushchev became more active in attempting to hit on a "quick fix" to solve the various crises. As the issues became larger and more critical, so too were the solutions. Michel Tatu suggests, for example, that in the spring of 1964 Khrushchev intended to involve individual Presidium members as agricultural trouble shooters. "...Since direct assumption of

responsibility for agriculture by the Party regional apparatus did not bring the expected results, and since Khrushchev had chosen to solve the problems through increased central planning, the only thing left for him to do was to bring the major central hierarchy into play.¹⁹ The fact that Khrushchev meant to assign such matters a chicken and hog breeding to individual members of the Presidium is extraordinary, particularly if one accepts the proposal that he was only primus inter pares and that such a program obviously disregarded the sensibilities of his colleagues.

Again in 1964, Khrushchev launched a campaign that seemed designed not to repair the damage previously done to the important connections with the military-industrial lobby and the apparatus, but to further aggravate the differences. He asserted that any sacrifices made for the sake of chemistry and fertilizer production were justified and even that "some temporary slowdown in the rate of growth of certain branches of industry was necessary."²⁰ In addition, he proposed that the military budget be cut by 600 million rubles for 1964.²¹

Then in September 1964, Khrushchev

at a joint meeting of the CPSU Presidium and the Council of Ministers...proposed a virtual revolution in regime planning, calling for a decisive shift in both the structure of the Soviet economy and the future direction of development. He unveiled a scheme for putting consumer production in 'first place' in regime planning.²²

As Abraham Brumberg suggests this proposal "was most likely the last straw for those sundry forces whom he had so con-

sistently antagonized, and who now came together to engineer his demise."²³

Given the enormous degree of political antagonism that Khrushchev generated between himself and the most powerful groups and individuals within Soviet society, it is an indicator of his power and the intricacies of the system that it took two or three years to operationalize his ouster. Perhaps it is significant that there was not a highly competent rival within the Presidium that could engineer the forces necessary to accomplish the task earlier. On the other hand, the two prior successions had not been accomplished any more expeditiously and they had taken place in the absence of a recognized leader.

A survey of the data suggests that those variables developed during the Lenin and Stalin succession were very much in operation during the Khrushchev ouster and the subsequent political maneuvering. Khrushchev's attempt to initiate a revolution from above could not succeed as long as the traditional Russian bureaucratic inertia was operable. The fact that he was not able to alter this inertia through the use of terror as Stalin had, was the result of a combination of factors such as the maturing of Soviet society and his own de-Stalinization campaign. Khrushchev's successors had learned the lessons well and were to prove exceptionally sensitive to the key variables operable within Soviet political society.

THE SUCCESSION

Although it is perhaps only technically correct to refer to October 1964 as the Brezhnev succession, the fact that no one has replaced him as the senior secretary of the CPSU would tend to support the statement. Clearly, however, this would be a gross over-simplification of the events and circumstances surrounding the years immediately following 1964. Before engaging in an analysis of the variables that surrounded Brezhnev's consolidation of power, it is important in terms of future reference to briefly analyze the mechanics of the coup/ouster.

There are two areas of consideration which must be studied when analyzing Khrushchev's ouster; the circumstances and events that actually took place and those that did not.

As Tatu, Linden, and a host of others point out, the conflict model of Soviet politics was in full operation by 1964 and there were clear indications at least in retrospect, that Khrushchev's power was suffering. He had demonstrated a unique ability to antagonize the most powerful elements of Soviet political society, and there were open indicators of a decided anti-Khrushchev nature which must have come to the attention of the First Secretary. But for all his economic and foreign policy failures and his domestic political infelicities, he was incapable of changing his style or of absorbing the significance of the situation. As Michel Tatu points out, for instance, "...he traveled more than ever, and this is the main reason for what happened to him.

Altogether, not counting weekends, he was away for about 135 days in the first eight months of 1964, more than half the period.²⁴ As I mentioned earlier, this technique had proven extremely effective during the earlier stages of the power struggle, but by 1964, it was obviously a dangerous technique. Specifically, Khrushchev's absence from Moscow during the days prior to the October 14 Central Committee plenum clearly facilitated the mechanizations necessary to engineer the coup. If one recalls the intrigue surrounding the demise of Beria, the air around the Kremlin just prior to the plenum must have been thick indeed.

If Khrushchev had alienated himself from the powerful interest groups within Soviet society as I have attempted to show, it may be important to consider what part they played in his actual demise, and how they were handled by the new leadership.

THE APPARATUS

T.H. Rigby suggests four bases of "personal relationships" which come into play when discussing and analyzing Soviet politics. They are: ties based upon prior service together (this is the strongest relationship according to Rigby), shared attitudes based on common prior experiences, congruent policy views, and recognition based simply upon one man having appointed another.²⁵ The last one of the list is the weakest relationship according to Rigby. A cursory analysis of the data surrounding the years 1958 to 1964

clearly underscores the fact that not only did Khrushchev rely heavily on this last category, but that he succeeded in further reducing the political currency associated with the appointments by limiting the tenure of those appointed. Khrushchev's rationale for this policy was probably associated with the desire to reduce the risk of the formation of an opposition group, a program that clearly backfired. However, given the nature of the power of the apparatus, and its relation to the success or failure of any Soviet leadership, the removal of the Party First Secretary presented serious considerations. As Tatu points out, "the average rank-and-file supporter of Khrushchev--an apparatchik promoted through patronage by the former Party chief--is unlikely to have had serious qualms about denying old ties... (as Rigby suggests). However, he did have to be assured that no thorough purge was in the offing."²⁶ Precisely 30 days following the ouster, an anxious apparatus was given the assurances it needed. "A plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee was held on November 16, 1964. It is resolved for purposes of strengthening the guiding role of the Party and its local bodies in communist construction...to have a single territory or province Party organization."²⁷ Thus, there were clear indications that a return to the status quo was going to be identified with the new leadership. Additionally, as if to further underscore the reaffirmation of the status quo, a Pravda editorial of December 6, 1964 had the following reassuring tone. "The task as it now stands is to assess

calmly and in a businesslike way the positive and negative aspects of the reorganizations...that have taken place in recent years. In certain circumstances, when obvious mistakes have been made, all that is needed to correct the situation is to return to the old forms that had already justified themselves."²⁸ One can almost hear the collective sigh of relief that this statement must have evoked among the apparatchiki. The importance of this move in terms of power politics was further underlined at the 23rd Party Congress of April, 1966 when Brezhnev associated himself with the retrenchment by stating in his speech, "We are pleased to be able to remind the Congress that the November, 1954, plenary session of the CPSU reunited the province industrial and rural Party organization into single entities, thereby restoring the Leninist principle of Party structure and eliminating the serious errors that had been committed in this matter."²⁹

Obviously, the role of the Party was to be strengthened and restored to pre-Khrushchev bureaucratic stability, and Brezhnev wanted to be associated with this policy. Security of tenure for Party apparatchiki equated to a vote of confidence for the new leadership and promised a high measure of unity and discipline among the cadres. That this unity is important can best be understood by defining the potential of the Party within the Soviet system. Leonard Shapiro goes far in clarifying the issue in his discussion of the lowest level of Party organization, the Primary Party Organization.

"It is here...that the greater prestige enjoyed by the party comes into play, the realization that the all-important voice of Moscow is at the end of the telephone at the local party secretary's elbow. Moreover, it is often the party and the party alone, that in practice can 'get things done."³⁰ Clearly, in a system characterized by an enormous and extremely cumbersome bureaucracy, the ability to "get things done" takes on very significant import. Moreover, this significance is not merely associated with rallying support among the rank-and-file for policies and programs, but it is associated with much more tangible factors. Again, Shapiro very aptly sums it up by reminding the student of Soviet politics that "the primaries (Primary party organizations) are charged with the duty of exercising 'control' (supervision) over the enterprises in which they are formed. The party organizations are frequently enjoined not to attempt to 'replace' the normal government or economic machinery. But as they have to take the blame for shortcomings, it is only natural that they should, at times, virtually take over the running of an enterprise."³¹ Finally, Shapiro codifies the potential of the Party by stating, "This great authority of the party in relation to the vast and uncomplicated state and social machinery...can, however, only be achieved if the party speaks in one voice, if it is disciplined and united."³² For any potential Soviet leader, merely reminding the members of the Party of the Leninist principle of democratic centralism was not enough. For the majority there had to be an identifiable program that

impacted favorably upon them. A return to the status quo was an outstanding political move, particularly given the rather cautious and conservative mind-set of the traditional Russian bureaucrat. Brezhnev not only reminded the Party of democratic centralism, but stressed an increased role of the Party as a whole and the Central Committee in particular. Both were easily supportable by the apparatus. "Recently the CPSU Central Committee has taken a number of important steps in this direction. The development of the principle of democratic centralism has found expression in the further strengthening of the principle of collective leadership at the center...(and) in the enhancement of the role of plenary sessions of the CPSU Central Committee."³³

THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

As mentioned earlier, Khrushchev had consistently antagonized the powerful military-industrial interest group during the last four or five years of his tenure as First Secretary. Given the extent to which the military had been involved in the arrest of Beria and the defect of the anti-party group, the question of its role in the October ouster is of no minor interest, particularly when one is searching for constant Soviet succession variables. That the military played a relatively minor role in the mechanizations surrounding the leadership change is perhaps best described by Tatu.

Judging from appearances, the army played a minor (role): far smaller than in 1957, at any rate. At that time, troop movements were noticed around Moscow, the army mobilized its vehicles to transport the members of the Central Committee,

and Marshal Zhukov emerged as the strong man of the hour. Nothing of this sort happened in 1964. As noted, two marshals who belonged to the Central Committee, Bagramian and Yeremenko, were in Riga at the critical time, on the evening of October 13. The former had some influence as commander of the rearward area and Deputy Defense Minister, but the latter, while much more a Khrushchev supporter, wielded scarcely any power in his capacity as Inspector-General. Moreover, seven marshals were in Moscow on Monday the 12th for a Polish reception. They were Malinovsky, A.A. Grechko, S.S. Biryuzov, I.S. Konev, K.S. Moskalenko, V.I. Chuikov and V.D. Sokolovsky--in other words, almost the whole of the high command.³⁴

Tatu goes on to state that, "In any case, there was no sign of any opposition to the plot on their part."³⁵ However, this may be an oversimplification of the facts. Given the very importance of their (the military) activities in power struggles of the past, neutrality may have been as damaging as support had been helpful. If this is indeed the case, one would expect that Brezhnev would have sought the active support of the military in attempting to consolidate his power. This was in fact to be the case, but not until Brezhnev had insured the supremacy of the Party over all aspects of Soviet society. In fact, it is likely that as a result of its neutrality, coupled with the need for clearly establishing the primacy of the Party, the military was to play a minor role in the immediate post-Khrushchev period. Tatu suggests that, "Since its contribution to Khrushchev's overthrow had been small, it was in no position to thrust its chief into the Party Presidium as happened to Zhukov after the 1957 crisis."³⁶ The military not only did not gain from the ouster, at least not initially, but, "their

budget was cut by 500 million rubles for the 1965 fiscal year.³⁷ However, in the years to come, particularly following the consolidation of the Party's position, the military was to experience a dramatic reversal of its fortunes. Significantly, Brezhnev has devised a method for dealing with the military lobby which has proven extremely effective. As John Dornberg surmises, "He has consistently reaffirmed the principle of civilian control without liquidating or publicly embarrassing his generals (methods employed by Stalin and Khrushchev respectively)...Most important of all, however, he has forced the military to share responsibility for political decisions by drawing the members of the military establishment into the decision-making process."³⁸

In summary, it can be said that the military remained a powerful voice within the system and that Khrushchev's antagonisms were as much a contributor to his eventual downfall as Brezhnev's partiality toward that sector has contributed to his stability. There is strong evidence to suggest that there exists a parallel between the rising fortunes of the Soviet defense establishment and the political fortunes of Leonid Brezhnev.

THE "STEEL-EATERS"

Khrushchev's assumption of the Stalinist tactic for assuming the policy platforms of defeated opponents was a contributing factor toward his demise. His appropriation of Malenkov's consumer oriented economy in 1959 was destined to

shake the economic structure of the Soviet Union in much the same way that de-Stalinization shook the political foundations. Unfortunately for Khrushchev, the Soviet consumer hardly occupies a position of political force within the society relative to that of the military. Isolated, the heavy industrial lobby would be significant but not insurmountable in terms of power. Combined with the military, the total strength is apparently unassailable. Although the immediate post-Khrushchev period was characterized by at least public tolerance on the part of the leadership for a continuation of support for consumer industry, the statistics do not support the rhetoric. Michel Tatu probably summarizes the issue most succinctly by stating, "The 'steel-eaters' lobby, as noted on several occasions, is a permanent institution in Soviet political life, and remained so without any interruption after Khrushchev's downfall."³⁹

But perhaps most important of all in analyzing the evolution of Soviet politics is that while certain of the key variables continued to operate, at least one was to suffer an overall loss of power. "There is also little to be said about the police lobby, which kept in the background as far as the key issue was concerned. There were few signs of any upsurge of politically independent KGB activity."⁴⁰ While it cannot be said that the heavy industrial group supplanted the KGB in terms of power, it is clear that the latter suffered some loss of political significance as a result of the

general maturization of the system and the former became even further entrenched.

THE TACTICS

Having antagonized all of his political power bases while continuing to remain constantly absent from the Kremlin, the ouster, once the necessity for it became an acknowledged fact among his rivals, was fairly straightforward. The variable of factionalism, so important in previous power struggles, again became the operable element in the equation. Robert Conquest suggests, "There is no such thing as non-conflict politics. 'To govern is to choose,' and that the Soviet system is especially susceptible to conflict because it is constructed to force ideological solutions upon the recalcitrant crises it must deal with...and because its leaders have over the years been selected for their ruthlessness, ambition, and intrigue."⁴¹ Khrushchev unified the opposition and therefore increased the level of conflict within that model exponentially.

It should be noted here, however, that in terms of Soviet succession politics, the proposed new leader must be a believable candidate. As Conquest further states, "In the first place, political prestige seems essential. But...a great concentration of such prestige is not adequate in itself; there must be credibility about a man's assumption to the leading position."⁴² This concept is both obvious and logical but it also defines the parameters of an intricate problem. How, particularly in 1964, could the organizers of the

coup satisfactorily achieve the two-pronged goal of stability of leadership while at the same time placing a credible individual in the top position? The answer was the more or less traditional diffusion of power to decrease the level of threat. Brezhnev, who himself represented a degree of threat in his position as "heir presumptive" was elevated to the position of greatest potential power while having a series of constraints levied against that potential. Not the least of the constraints was his requirement to share his authority with, if not the entire Presidium as publicized, then at least his opposite within the governmental hierarchy, Alexie Kosygin. Unfortunately for Kosygin, the governmental system had never been a base from which to launch a bid for overall supremacy (due mainly to a general lack of legitimacy associated with that organization), and had traditionally become operable only after power had been codified by the new leader.

There were other constraints that came as a direct result of the nature of Khrushchev's systemic abuses. The tone of these constraints was perhaps most clearly set by an article appearing in the official Party journal, Partiynaya zhizn, immediately following the ouster. The author called for a stop to the situation whereby, "every word of the man at the top is regarded as a discovery, and his actions and attitudes are assumed to be infallible."⁴³ Given that the power of the Senior Party secretary had been largely associated with his ability to command the total subserviance of the

rank-and-file party members, this attitude could only force Brezhnev to proceed with more pronounced caution.

Finally, and perhaps most significant of all, was the policy of "stability of cadres" with which Brezhnev found himself saddled. Quite clearly had Stalin been so circumscribed, he would never have been able to manipulate the all-important Party congresses in the 1920's. This can also be said of Khrushchev where such limitations would have severely limited his rise in the 1950's and would very probably have cost him his position in the crisis of 1957. As Grey Hodnett points out, the policy severely limited Brezhnev's ability "to eliminate from the top leadership those who have opposed him on policy grounds and to replace them with people of his own choosing."⁴⁴ Jerry Hough provides an excellent statistical example of precisely what the policy translated into in terms of the CPSU Central Committee. He calculates that, "Less than 50 percent of the living full members of the 1956 Central Committee were re-elected in 1956. However, of the 166 full members of the 1961 Central Committee who were still alive in 1966, 83 percent were named to the 1966 Central Committee."⁴⁵ This is not to suggest, however, that in subsequent years Brezhnev was unable to dispose of important rivals. This was not the case, as will be discussed below.

THE ACTORS

As I have mentioned, Khrushchev's official power was bifurcated into a shared relationship between Brezhnev on

the Party side and Kosygin on the governmental side. Given the nature of the power enjoyed by the CPSU within the Soviet system as has been reiterated by analysis of past political power struggles, the separation appears extremely uneven. This lopsidedness is even more pronounced when one considers Kosygin's background. "Kosygin was the typical technocrat or 'manager', who had practically never held any Party post. (His) only service in the Party apparatus was apparently for a few months in 1938, when he took over an unspecified function at the Leningrad Oblast Committee before becoming the city's mayor."⁴⁶ The match appears so uneven that taken in isolation it simply is no contest. However, the situation could hardly have been isolated, particularly given the presence of one Mikhail Suslov.

The figure of Suslov is captured most poignantly by the pen of John Dornberg. It is a picture of a very powerful and extremely cautious man.

As we know now, the man Khrushchev should really have been watching was Mikhail Suslov: the Kremlin's eminence grise, the myopic professor, the ultra-conservative ideologist who had been a secretary of the Party without interruption since 1947, senior even to Khrushchev in that elitist circle of Soviet power; Suslov, the recurrent king-maker who had been either privy to or instrumental in every important reshuffle in the hierarchy since Stalin's death. In the ninety days between Brezhnev's anointment as Khrushchev's crown prince and the coup itself, it was Suslov who engineered the plot that ended Khrushchev's political agony and opened the pages of history to the Brezhnev era.⁴⁷

That Suslov was an instrumental figure in the organization of the plot is strongly supported by evidence uncovered

in Tatu's Power in the Kremlin. It was Suslov who headed the welcoming group that met Brezhnev upon his return from Berlin on Sunday, October 11 and it was Suslov who led the attack on Khrushchev at the plenary session of the Central Committee on Wednesday, 14 October.⁴⁸ According to Tatu's unofficial source, Suslov was the only formal speaker at the session. His recollection of the situation is as follows:

Suslov had the floor and was saying: 'The man has lost all humility, he has lost his conscience!' I thought he was talking about Ilyichiev, for I had been told about that time that he was going to be removed shortly. Then I noticed that Khrushchev was not in his usual chairman's place but was in a side seat at a distance from the Presidium. He was flushed and was clenching his fists. That was how I understood what was going on.⁴⁹

Although Khrushchev was not reaching for a pistol as Beria is alleged to have done, the arrest of Beria and the ouster of Khrushchev are fairly analogous in terms of the intrigue, deception and sensationalism involved.

What is fascinating about Suslov is that while he evidently engineered the ouster, and that his position within the Presidium must, therefore, have been considerable, he did not become the successor. In the post-Stalin period, Khrushchev was the engineer so that politically, at least, the precedent had been established. Could it be that Suslov was so extremely cautious that he was not willing to risk his gains in the zero-sum game of Soviet politics? Or is it that his position was so powerful that he represented such an enormous potential threat he was, therefore, denied supremacy by the other members of the Presidium? The answer to these

questions may never be known and the analyst is consequently forced to speculate. Under these circumstances, however, it may be helpful to note that Suslov still remains a powerful voice within the system and has apparently suffered none of the erosions of power that have been associated with other potentially powerful individuals. The result is that one suspects Suslov of cautiously eyeing the new regime as it slowly developed and then just as cautiously lending his support to Brezhnev when it appeared that there was little chance of suffering defeat. Concurrent with this initial period, it is perhaps likely that Suslov remained extremely non-committal. Additionally, his tactic was to maintain as low a profile as possible in order to reduce his presence as a threat to the others.

In the final analysis, Suslov appears to have been either a brilliant but unambitious apparatchik who was satisfied with his position and hungered for no more, or the one single individual who understood Soviet politics more than any of his contemporaries but was haltered by an overabundance of caution. What little evidence that does exist concerning the role Suslov has played in the Brezhnev era clearly suggest that the latter case is more likely closer to the fact.

That Suslov was powerful but wished to remain in the shadows does not presuppose that there was a total absence of powerful and threatening individuals within the new collective. There were, in fact, two such individuals; Shelepin and Podgorny.

At the outset, Podgorny perhaps represented the most direct threat to Brezhnev. The nature of the threat is best evidenced by a look at Podgorny's political biography in the years from the anti-party group to the ouster. In June, 1958 Podgorny was elevated to the post of candidate member to the Presidium and then two years later was made a full member at the same plenum that transferred Brezhnev from the Secretariat to the governmental post of Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.⁵⁰ At this point, Brezhnev was on his way down and Podgorny was on the way up. Then in June, 1963 both men were assigned positions within the Secretariat, reversing Brezhnev's downward trend and placing them as rival "heirs" to Khrushchev.⁵¹ The result of these moves was to increase Podgorny's power relative to Brezhnev's immediately following the ouster.

Ironically, and most fortunate for Brezhnev, Podgorny did not prove to be a brilliant political adversary. As if he had been living in a political vacuum during the final years of Khrushchev's reign and had not understood the antagonisms that had contributed to the ouster, Podgorny firmly stepped forward under the traditional banner of failure. In May, 1965 he advocated an increase in consumer goods by saying, "There was a time when the Soviet people consciously accepted material restrictions for the sake of the priority development of heavy industry and the strengthening of our defense capability. That was fully justified...But now collective wealth is multiplying year by year, while conditions are emerging that make

it easier to satisfy the worker's ever-growing domestic and cultural needs.⁵² What is significant about this policy stance other than the obvious ones already mentioned, is that not only did Podgorny place himself opposite Brezhnev but as Tatu points out, he created an ever greater imbalance by alienating Suslov.⁵³ The result of the contest was the removal of Podgorny from serious political contention by "elevating" him to the chairmanship of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.⁵⁴

Although Podgorny was the most significant adversary at the outset of the Brezhnev era, in reality it was Shelepin that was the most dangerous potential threat. In 1964, he was the youngest member of the top elite (he was 46) and had a foot in more key organizations than any other member of the hierarchy. He had been the KGB chief for three years and a member of the Secretariat since 1961. As Tatu points out, "In a team with such figures as Brezhnev, Suslov, Kosygin, Shelepin inevitably stood out as the man of the future."⁵⁵ However, the nature of Shelepin's threat was not only associated with youthful ambition, but more concretely with his organizational connections. As Leonard Shapiro points out, his direction of the Committees of Party and State Control (CPSC) represented no minor amount of potential power.

The Committees of Party and State Control were given very stringent powers. They could carry out investigations into the activities of all party and Soviet organs, all industrial and agricultural enterprises, and of all members of the organs of control and supervision within ministries. They could order defects which they discovered to be

put right; and could set aside acts and orders of which they disapproved. They could impose all manner of disciplinary measures on 'holders of office'; they could impose a financial surcharge, they could demote or dismiss; and they could forward the papers to the procurators with a view to a criminal prosecution being launched. There was no provision for appeal by the individual affected. (The Committees) Chairman was both a Secretary of the Central Committee and a deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R.⁵⁶

It is a statement of Khrushchev's arrogance and self-assuredness that he created such an enormous potential power source. As Yaroslav Bilinsky suggests, "An ambitious man could use the CPSC network to build his 'empire' within the Party."⁵⁷ Bilinsky went on to refer to a study made by Grey Hodnett which tentatively noted that after November 1964, the "CPSC was indeed beginning to remove some high officials from office."⁵⁸ Clearly, such an ambitious man could not be allowed to continue unabated, particularly as Dornberg suggests, when there were, "persistent rumors on the Moscow grapevine and the speculative hints in the foreign press about his promising future and the prospects of his supplanting Brezhnev some day."⁵⁹ Just as Stalin and Khrushchev had not represented a serious challenge to their colleagues, Shelepin was a clear and present danger that united the opposition. The result was the abolition of the CPSC in December, 1965 and the removal of Shelepin from any association with a like concern. Additionally, in December 1965, he was removed from his post as Deputy Prime Minister under the traditional rationale that it was, "necessary that Comrade A.N. Shelepin should

concentrate upon his work within the Central Committee of the CPSU."⁶⁰ By the spring of 1966 the shine was off Shelepin and following the 23rd Party Congress, Brezhnev had made considerable progress toward consolidating his position.

THE XXIIIrd PARTY CONGRESS

As I mentioned earlier, there were no revolutionary changes that were immediately embarked upon following the Khrushchev ouster unless, of course, one can claim that a return to the status quo in Party matters can be so construed. Stability and caution were the hallmark of the new regime and, as Wolfgang Leonard points out, this applied to certain programs and policies that were not particularly appealing to those who had engineered the coup. "Continuing destalinization and the relatively liberal course remained in force..."⁶¹ In fact, as Tatu points out, the military budget was cut by 500 million rubles for the 1965 fiscal year.⁶² However, by the spring of 1965, a "hardening" of policy began to take shape. Many sources relate this turn of events to the American escalation of the Vietnam War, but it is also likely that Brezhnev, by this time, had acquired a clear picture of the sources of political power necessary to strengthen and consolidate his position. By the 23rd Party Congress in April 1966, the policy drift of the new regime was quite clear. As Leonard points out, "Even though there was no open rehabilitation of Stalin, the tougher line and the deceleration of destalinization could not be overlooked."⁶³ In general, according to Leonard, there was a "hardening" of policy, particularly in the cultural sphere.

In Brezhnev's speech to the Congress, he declared that Soviet literature and art be imbued "with the noble spirit of Party-mindedness."⁶⁴ Additionally, Brezhnev called for greater discipline within the ranks of the party.

Finally, with regard to the military, Brezhnev had this to say, "Constant concern for strengthening the countries defenses and the power of our glorious forces is a highly important task of the Soviet state. The Soviet Army showed... that it is a worthy offspring of the working class, peasantry and intelligentsia...(stormy applause). It is necessary...to show more concern for the soldiers and officers of the Soviet Army and their families."⁶⁵

Overall, therefore, the drift appeared reactionary and designed to appeal to the broadest spectrum of rank-and-file Party members and to the powerful interest groups (i.e., the military-industrial complex). This tact was very likely to be in line with the general consensus within the Politburo.

For future reference concerning the evolution of Soviet politics, it is, therefore, important to note here that when Brezhnev sought to consolidate his power, the program that was designed to accomplish the task was not only a return to the status quo in a reaction to Khrushchev's revolution from above, but a return with a vengeance. Those groups that were alienated by the new Party line, namely the intelligentsia, economic reformers and the like, quite obviously did not constitute a viable political force within the Soviet elite. Survival for Brezhnev was closely associated with appeasement

of those former groups mentioned, a policy with which Brezhnev was likely to be comfortable in any case.

It is also significant to mention that it was this Congress that reconstituted the title of General Secretary and renamed the Presidium to Politburo. Both of these changes were associated with Stalinist times and serve as further indicators of where the regime was going in 1966.

By the end of the 23rd Party Congress, therefore, it can be comfortably maintained that the immediate and direct threats to Brezhnev had greatly diminished and it appeared as though he was slowly and carefully consolidating his power. Clearly, barring a major political or economic faux pas, he began to take on the appearance of a man planning to be in control for some time to come. To say, however, that he had achieved the same degree of power as Khrushchev had enjoyed in 1959 or even to suggest that he was primus inter pares, would have been a serious exaggeration of reality. That kind of power was not to be his for several more years.

CONSOLIDATION AND SURVIVAL

It is perhaps important to note at this point that while the Brezhnev era has been rather infamous for its "immobilism" and there has been a major policy line associated with the stability of party cadres, this does not suggest that Brezhnev was unable to use political patronage to his immediate advantage. Certainly there were no major purges of cadres on the national level, but given that the system is based on patronage,

it is only logical and apparently reasonable that Brezhnev should wish to place his own personnel in certain responsible positions. To this end, as Jerry Hough points out, some significant changes were initially made. "Between April and December 1965, one-half of the Central Committee's department heads were changed. That Brezhnev had a major hand in these changes is suggested by the fact that the replacements in such key units as the Science and Education Department, the General Department (which distributes communications to the Central Committee and is also apparently in charge of security matters), and the Business Office were former associates of the First Secretary while he was in Dnepropetrovsk or Moldavia."⁶⁶ However, it appears that once those understandable changes were made, further changes were kept at an absolute minimum.

Turnover has also been quite low among voting members of the Central Committee. Sixty-one percent of the voting members elected to the Central Committee in 1961 and still alive in 1971 were reelected to the Central Committee...Eighty-one percent of the living full members of the 1966 Central Committee retained their membership in 1971. An incredible 89 percent of the living full members of the 1971 Central Committee were reelected in 1976...⁶⁷

Having clearly established the CPSU as the single most powerful constituency within the Soviet system, Brezhnev has pursued a policy quite favorable to this group. What is interesting is that he apparently does not suffer from the same degree of paranoia displayed by his two predecessors. In analyzing the reasons behind this atmosphere of political security, one is struck not by how brilliant the regime has

been in its policies and programs, but simply by its ability to survive.

In the initial period following the ouster, the oligarchy, as I have noted, was reacting to the exuberance of the Khrushchev era. Stability and calm were the means by which the center was attempting to reconstruct the shattered linkages with those institutions whose support was absolutely essential. Quite obviously this is not to suggest that it was the institution that ousted Khrushchev but it is perhaps not too extreme to speculate that this is what the members of the Presidium feared should the situation continue unabated.

Having mollified the Party while simultaneously strengthening his own position, Brezhnev proceeded to reconstruct other important linkages.

The military was among the first to benefit from this rapprochement. Although the first defense budget suffered the 500 million ruble cut that appears to have been a hangover from Khrushchev, the general line toward the military became much more consiliatory as I have suggested. However, significant ties were to be forged by Brezhnev following the death of Marshall Malinovsky in March, 1967. At this point, Brezhnev was able to appoint his "war-time comrade in arms" Grechko to the position.⁶⁸ However, the linkages were to continue to the point that, as John Dornberg speculates, "Of the twenty high-ranking military officers elected to full membership of the Central Committee at the 24th Party Congress in 1971, at least seven can be considered political allies of Brezhnev."⁶⁹

Further, T.H. Rigby points out that, "No member of the Politburo in 1971 has served as Defense Minister, nor did the achievement of senior military rank play a major role in the political careers of any of them. Brezhnev has the most significant military connections (and) the political significance of his military experience consists not in its contribution to his rise to Politburo status, but in the use he has subsequently made of it to cultivate support among the military and ex-servicemen."⁷⁰ Given that this is true, it supports the fact that not only had Brezhnev's power increased measurably by 1971 but that the power of the military had also risen. This being the case, there was a de facto increase in the heavy industrial managerial class further strengthening that traditional arm of Soviet society. That this strengthening has remained constant to the present (as will be discussed below) strongly suggests a contribution toward system survivability.

Quite clearly then, Brezhnev's policy was one closely associated with maintaining strong ties with the important sectors of Soviet society in an effort to survive. As Jerry Hough summarizes, "Many of the post-1964 decisions satisfied the interest groups most directly involved, and none of the decisions has evoked a total defeat or even a major threat to any of the important institutional competitors."⁷¹ It seems almost as if Brezhnev's strategy was based on the knowledge that if he remained in office long enough he would achieve a position of at least primus inter pares. Seven years later, at the conclusion of the 25th Party Congress, he had arrived.

IV. THE CPSU AND THE MILITARY

PRESENT SYSTEMIC VARIABLES

As I have indicated, Soviet society has evolved such that there are certain major elements which have a direct and significant impact on the conduct of domestic political initiatives. To be sure, there are an enormous number of variables which could be considered, however, it seems to me that certain key independent variables have evolved over the course of Soviet political history such that they are, and will be, the most influential in determining the parameters of the post-Brezhnev period and the characteristics of the new leadership. Consequently, an analysis of these key variables is paramount to developing reasonable scenarios for the future.

THE CPSU

As I have already indicated, the position of the party vis-a-vis the other institutional actors within the system has increased to the point that it sits at the top of the power structure. This is not to suggest, however, that its political fortunes are directly linked to Brezhnev's position. It is perhaps more correct to suggest that each has complimented the other. What is important is to define the derivation of the party's power and then determine what general characteristics are associated with individuals that presently comprise the elite elements of that organization.

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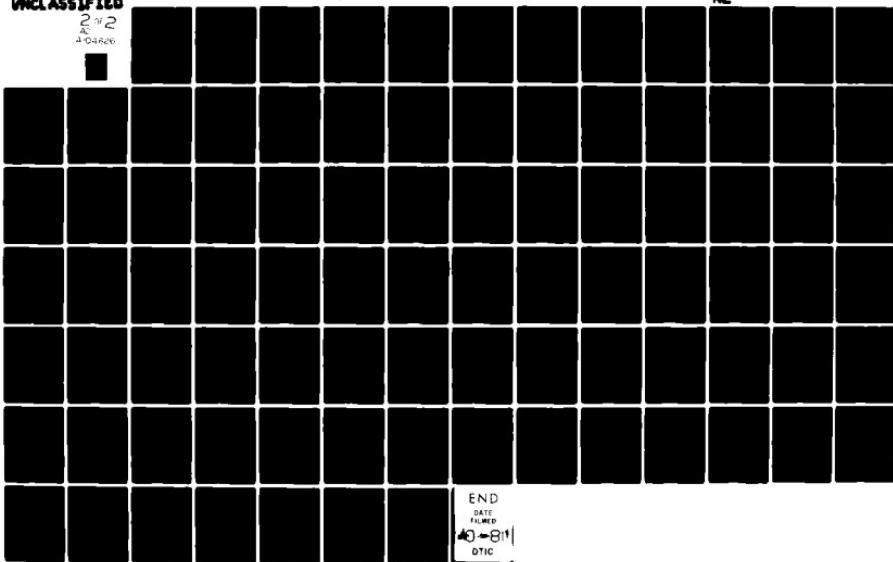
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As in any society, power in the Soviet Union is associated with control of the economic might that forms the basis for all other activity. Within the Soviet system, this control is the direct responsibility of the provincial first secretary who, as Alexander Yanov suggests, is "the local embodiment of the Party's universal will, who exercises supreme control over the local economic empire, who really answers for the normal functioning of the empire."² The exact nature of this power is vividly depicted by Yanov in the following description of how the system operates.

The scene is Leningrad, 1973. My interlocutor is in his late fifties. He is a tall man with sharp features, tastefully dressed, with a decidedly authoritative, even somewhat arrogant manner. The word 'boss' seems to be written in big letters on his face. I am in the office of the general director of a large machine-building association. It happens that I have come at a dramatic moment, when a shortage of a generally scarce raw material threatens to halt the operations of the gigantic casting shop. A suspension of operations will mean idleness for almost 1,500 workers, a situation that is among the most dangerous in Soviet industry.

What does a high-ranking manager do in such a situation? He makes phone calls. The general director makes his calls strictly in accordance with the hierarchy. He first calls the first secretary of the borough Party committee; then a province Party committee instructor; then the assistant head of the province committee's department of machine building; then the head of the department; then the province committee's secretary for industry.

Why was he calling all these officials? To 'rob' someone (again semi-official jargon), it turns out: some cardboard factory or pulp and paper mill--in short, someone from Group B. Using the 'vertushka,' it is possible to obtain official permission for an unofficial 'robbery.' What is involved is the compulsory withdrawal of raw materials in short supply from enterprises that produce consumer goods. The consumer can wait; nothing will happen to him if he 'underreceives' (also jargon)

his diapers or slippers: the 'robbery' of light industry that takes place daily and on a nationwide scale has been legitimized; one might even call it sacred.

There is only one way out: once again a phone call is required. This time it is necessary to call the Master himself (the first secretary of the province committee). He is the only person who has the authority and power to order an all-union dragnet, so to speak, for scarce raw materials. He alone can call the Masters of other provinces and offer them a deal. This makes it clearly evident who bears the final responsibility, so to speak, for the fate of industry in the province, for the life or death of any of its enterprises--in other words, who is their actual owner. It is the first secretary of the province committee--the local embodiment of the Party's universal will--who exercises supreme control over the local economic empire, who really answers for the normal functioning of the empire. He answers for it with his enormous political capital.³

Clearly, the provincial first secretary constitutes a very substantial source of power within his region.

Drawing from the above description of individual power, it can readily be seen that the combined strength of these officials constitutes an extremely formidable force on the programs and policies of the regime. This force is still further strengthened when it is considered that, as T.H. Rigby revealed in a 1978 study of the Russian Republic (RSFSR), the RSFSR obkom and kraikom first secretaries, "make up almost two-thirds of all republic and regional party officials elected as full members of the present Central Committee."⁴ This fact takes on added significance when considered in light of the overall enhancement of the importance of the party organs and particularly that of the Central Committee that has been associated with the Brezhnev regime. However, power, as it is allied with the regional first secretaries,

is not necessarily a new phenomenon. What is new is the changing profile of both the individuals who become first secretaries and the characteristics of the system as a result of the infusion of these new elements into the power structure.

There are two key indicators which suggest an evolutionary trend within the Soviet elite. Given that the regional first secretaries form the vanguard of this elite, a general profile of this group ought reasonably to be representative of the trends among ambitious apparatihiki as a whole. These evolutionary indicators are associated with the type of education that is preferred and the career patterns as expressed in the job connections of the group.

In the realm of education Rigby has discovered certain general requirements. "For many years now an official could not hope to gain appointment as an obkom first secretary unless he had higher education qualifications. Most persons aspiring to these positions had professional training--especially as engineers or agriculture specialists."⁵ This was true for quite some time as Rigby clearly states. What has changed is both the quality of the education received and the area of specialization. As Dmitri Simes uncovered in a recent study of the Soviet elite, the Brezhnev generation has been characterized by a rather second class education, as a result of both the institution from which it was received and the period in the individual's career at which the advanced education was undertaken.⁶ Additionally, as Rigby's

study suggests, "The main change over this period (1965-1976) is the shift away from agriculture in favor of industry as the best represented career component."⁷ Rigby goes on to indicate that this shift reflects "longterm trends in the preoccupations of the regional party apparatus."⁸

The picture that begins to develop as a result of an analysis of the regional first secretaries, and the entire Soviet elite for that matter, is one shifting away from the revolutionary turned bureaucrat, to one of increasing specialization and professionalism particularly as it applies to industrial management. However, it is essential to make a distinction between those older members of the elite, particularly the Politburo, and those individuals who received their higher education as an unbroken part of their youth in the post-war period. The qualitative educational improvement of these younger individuals coupled with the "longterm trends" within Soviet society and the party have resulted in a decreased ideological purity and an increase in careerism. The impact of this shift has not been felt among the very highest echelons of the party, the Politburo in particular, largely as a result of the "nomenklatura" system. As Albert Salter notes, "...the underlying principle (of this system) is that of officially sanctioned political patronage. The requirement that a candidate for any important party or non-party position be acceptable to a higher echelon of the party's unified personnel system seems guaranteed to encourage a certain sameness in the characteristics of the recruiters and

the recruited, as well as to promote excessive cronyism."⁹ Given this system and the stability of cadres policy that has been the hallmark of the Brezhnev era, it would appear that a duality of interests and experiences is building within the party ranks. That the older generation as symbolized by the Politburo, continues to select members homogenous to their group image and career patterns is perhaps best illustrated by the youngest member of that group, Grigory V. Romanov who is now 57. Specifically, Romanov received his college degree while working full time. As Simes points out, "He already had a fairly responsible and demanding job as chief of a technical design office when he graduated from the evening division of the Leningrad Shipbuilding Institute. To assess the actual quality of Romanov's education it is important to consider that; (1) evening divisions of Soviet universities and institutes are, as a rule, inferior to their regular counterparts, and (2) he joined the Leningrad party apparatus within a year of graduating. This would imply that he had been active in the party before, consequently did not have much time to study."¹⁰ Studies by Jerry Hough and Rigby indicate that Romanov's educational background is not typical of those just a few years younger.¹¹

The educational data therefore suggests that, at least in the past, the quality has been secondary to the area of study. Additionally, it seems that jobs held, particularly those that have been managerial positions in large, heavy-industrial enterprises, have been the most career-enhancing.

But because such jobs require a greater degree of specialization and expertise, the party generalist simply does not qualify any longer. The result is a situation whereby a proven industrial manager is pulled from the strictly economic sphere of the Soviet system, at some fairly advanced stage of his career, and placed in a responsible party job to gain experience. If this job is a regional first secretaryship, and if he does well, then cooptation into the central party hierarchy in Moscow is a logical next move. The result is the emergence of a group of younger party officials with a far smaller overall party experience level and a much more parochial set of interests. These interests are heavily skewed in favor of industrial output particularly with respect to heavy industry. A classic example of such an individual is Vladimir Dolgikh. As Simes points out, Dolgikh spent most of his career in mining management but just before he was promoted to the Central Committee Secretariat he spent four years as an obkom secretary.¹²

Clearly, if more individuals with backgrounds similar to Dolgikh advance rapidly up the power structure, a new career pattern will have been established which is even farther removed from revolutionary ideology. The implications of such a change are extremely obscure although one might reasonably assume that a stronger relationship between the highest party echelons and the military-industrial sector could be one result. This relationship takes on an ominous tone when considered

in light of the more restricted world-view associated with such individuals.

THE MILITARY

The party represents the key to political and economic control of the Soviet system but to think of it as operating in a vacuum, uninfluenced by other elements within the society would be to overlook considerable linkages with other significant constituencies. The military, as Roman Kolkowicz states, is perhaps the largest and most powerful of these various other elements. "The military, because of its organization, weapons, and philosophy represents the single greatest threat: it controls vast means of physical coercion, it is an integrated mechanism that can, in theory, respond to a few commands and can be rapidly mobilized; and it is a closed group with an elitist, anti-egalitarian value system."¹³ By this definition, the military has many of the characteristics that the party apparatus seems to posses or be in the process of evolving. Just as the party is finding it more and more necessary to coopt or recruit highly trained specialists into its ranks, so too have the military for many of the same reasons. "The influx of new and complex technology," as Kolkowicz goes on to say, "into the military service, and the complexity of nuclear warfare and the strategies and doctrines for the conduct of such a war have had a liberating effect on the officer corps, endowing experts with greater authority and role... The party's new pragmatism and higher appreciation of

most professional groups--the managers, scientists, and the military among them--has further strengthened the latters position.¹⁴ Additionally, as Harriet and William Scott have intimated, the military has been much quicker to recognize and promote these specialists within the organization.¹⁵ Seweryn Bialer also supports this phenomenon in his 1978 study. "The institution where the greatest turnover of personnel, a really massive replacement, has taken place in the 1970's at the upper-middle and middle levels of power in the Soviet armed forces."¹⁶ This trend is particularly significant in view of the party's apparent recalcitrance in keeping in step with this important constituency. Additionally, it appears as though these individuals will be in important positions within the military hierarchy in the next few years, thus constituting a powerful new force to be dealt with during the period of succession.

However, given that there are also powerful elements within the middle and upper levels of the party hierarchy who identify with the "new class" of Soviet elite, what, if any, are the linkages with the military? Perhaps the simplest method for answering that question is to define the functional interests of the armed forces. According to Kolkowicz they are: "The maintenance of a high level of investments in heavy industry; the maintenance of high levels of military budgets and expenditures and finally, the maintenance of a certain level of international political tension."¹⁷ Although it might reasonably be argued that these same interests may

be associated with the military of any major industrial nation, the extent to which they have been met in the Soviet Union suggests a powerful force with strong political influence.

Available evidence surrounding the political ties of the military supports a situation that implies a closeness not found in any major first world power, and certainly not in any western state. Beginning at the top, "overall control of the Soviet armed forces lies with the Council of Defense, chaired by the party's General Secretary."¹⁸ Additionally, the interests of the military are directly represented by the presence of the Defense Minister in the Politburo. But perhaps most indicative of the marriage is that, "of the Politburo members present on the mausoleum on 7 November (1979), Brezhnev, Ustinov and Andropov hold high military rank, and while the leaders standing to Brezhnev's left were in civilian clothes, on his right stood the top commanders of the Armed Forces. There is no evidence of any conflict in aims between Party and military."¹⁹ That this situation exists during an era in which the party is dominated by old apparatchik's and ideologues (in the case of Suslov) whose interests have the most potential for difference with the military, is cause for some degree of concern when considered in light of the elite trends mentioned earlier. Clearly, the passing of those aged apparatchiks presently in control of the reins of power could dictate a situation whereby the confluence of interests between the party and the military is greater than at any time in the past. This is further strengthened by Simes' analysis

that, "Since the military, on many issues allied with the defense-oriented industries, enjoys a particularly comfortable position in the Soviet institutional structure, it is not surprising that periods of bureaucratic stalemates usually favor its interests." Additionally Simes goes on to say that, "Characteristically, according to some informed speculation, major Soviet weapons programs were launched in years of political transition, when leaders maneuvering for power had to be particularly sensitive to the demands of the military-industrial complex."²⁰ If this is in fact so, and statistics seem to support this thesis, particularly where Brezhnev is concerned, then the outlook for the future is for more of the same. While economically the continuation of defense spending at its present rate will cause significant strains on the resources of the country (the exact nature of which will be pointed out later), the technocratization of the major political actors in the system make any reduction seem highly unlikely.

Additionally, as Kolkowicz points out, there is a secondary connection between heavy industrial strength and Soviet military strategy. As he points out, Colonel Trifonenko had the following to say concerning the need for strong investment in heavy industry; "in a possible nuclear-missile war, economics will determine its course and outcome first of all and mostly by what it is able to give for defense purposes before the war begins, in peacetime."²¹ Shortly thereafter, another Soviet military strategist, Colonel Grudinin, stated that,

"he who does not learn to defeat his enemy in peacetime is doomed to defeat in war."²² While this may seem simplistic, it is an extremely persuasive argument when applied to the already receptive ears of the ambitious party member whose background has been heavily steeped in military-industrial enterprises and areas.

There is however another aspect of military power that will most certainly play an influential part in the political infighting following the passing of Brezhnev and his contemporaries. This aspect is perhaps most succinctly stated by William and Harriet Scott. "Without military power, the Soviet Union today would simply be another developing nation."²³ This statement is true not only for its reference to international political influence but also from the fact that the enormous Soviet GNP is directly related to those industrial enterprises which constitute the material basis for a strong modern force. Clearly in this instance, one hand does indeed wash the other. But just as the economy is dependent on the military and vice versa, so too does the party depend on its ability to manipulate the military. As Kolkowicz suggests, "The Soviet Union's extensive political-military commitments as a superpower would be severely compromised by a major open crisis between the two institutions, so that the party is forced to be more circumspect in its treatment of the military."²⁴ That this is so today, reflects the enormous influence of the military in Soviet domestic politics and underscores the necessity of any potential successor not only to

consider their interests but to be clearly identifiable as one who understands their significance and specific needs. I, for one, am in complete agreement with a recent assessment made by the Scotts:

Power, once achieved, is seldom relinquished willingly. The prestige of the Soviet leadership is based to a great extent on the super-power status their armed forces have achieved for the nation. Even the average Soviet citizen appears to take pride in seeing that leaders of foreign nations visit his country to ask for arms or to sign international agreements. Whatever the cost may be in economic or social terms, the continued support and buildup of the Soviet armed forces will be maintained. The momentum of the military drive has not yet run its course.²⁵

However, the momentum may, in the long run, have been affected by the Afghanistan invasion. If the Soviet military can become immersed in a "no-win" situation, it would seem that their credibility as a political tool would suffer by some measure or another. Clearly, the relative ease with which the Czechoslovakia experiment was concluded, coupled by a general lack of decisive western response could only have enhanced the position of the military. The statistics strongly suggest that it did. Unfortunately for the west, and unlike the United States, the Soviets appear to clearly understand the need for an immediate and decisive victory in Afghanistan. Perhaps Dan Rather's question to an Afghan guerilla as to why he was fighting as the war was already lost was more correct than anyone thought at the time. The latest reports paint a rather bleak picture (the situation in Konar province, for example) and suggests that the Soviet military-party linkage will become still firmer.

There is, however, an interesting twist that has come about as a result of the new 1977 Soviet Constitution. Traditionally, and as has been reaffirmed in Article 6 of the new constitution, "The leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organizations and public organizations is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union."²⁶ However, as Peter S.H. Tang points out, there is an interesting situation that has developed regarding the military. "The Soviet Constitution states that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall form the Council of Defense of the USSR and confirm its composition; appoint and dismiss the high command of the Armed Forces of the USSR (Art. 121, Sec. 14)."²⁷ This article does not presently represent a dichotomy of interests between the party and state as Brezhnev occupies both top positions within each organ. A potential for crisis could develop, however, if, as is most likely, Brezhnev's power is diffused following his demise. In this instance, the military may see its interests being served most effectively by supporting the President of the Supreme Soviet, particularly if his political platform vis-a-vis the armed forces is more favorable than that of the party's top man.

Additionally, it must be remembered that although it is the local party officials that can "get things done," the industrial managers, while they may be members of the party, are part of the state bureaucracy. They are a powerful interest group of themselves and when combined with the

military would constitute a considerable threat to the party
insofar as the flexibility of policy options open to the
latter.

V. THE ECONOMY

Each previous Soviet succession, while characterized by conflict within the system's elite and its powerful interest groups, has of necessity required a nucleus around which the differences developed and from which positions were articulated. Traditionally, one of the main areas of confrontation and eventual success has dealt with economic problems. For this reason it is absolutely essential to identify those Soviet economic variables which will most likely become issues in the months and years following the Brezhnev regime. These variables become more important when one considers two facts concerning the present Soviet economic scene. One is that the Brezhnev regime is generally viewed as sorely lacking in dynamism, particularly in the economic sphere, and appears bent on passing major systemic decisions on to a successor regime. Second, and as an indicator of a situation requiring decisive action, "In the decade 1951-60 the growth rate (of the Soviet economy) was 5.8 percent. In the following decade it declined to 5.1 percent. And in the quinquennium 1971-75 it fell further to 3.7 percent."¹ However, to fully appreciate the significance of these facts, it is necessary to at least briefly review the evolution of the system.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1979 the Soviet Union had the "second largest economy in the world"² and was (is) by anyone's measure a great global

power. However, its present status must consider its historical evolution. This necessity is perhaps more significant in the case of the USSR than in any other country in the world, communist or otherwise.

War Communism, or the economic policy that prevailed from 1918 to 1921, was Lenin's method for ideologically explaining the beginnings of a command economy. After nationalizing all large scale factories and diffusing the agricultural land among the peasantry, the Bolsheviks soon discovered that the system was rapidly breaking down. The peasants were unwilling to produce and sell surplus agricultural goods (that over and above their immediate requirements) for the simple reason that there was no manufactured goods to buy. By establishing a system in which the central feature... "...and key to the whole system was the requisitioning of food supplies from peasants,"³ the needs of the military and the industrial sector could be met. Unfortunately, the forced requisitioning of agricultural goods caused an extremely negative reaction from the peasantry and, at the completion of the civil war, the system had to be abandoned.

In its place, Lenin established the New Economic Policy (NEP) which was essentially a return to semi-capitalism. The forced requisitioning of agricultural goods was halted and the peasants were allowed to sell their goods on the open market. "Favorable prices for agriculture provided additional incentives for the farmer to produce as much as he could for the market. In fact, the government retreated even further

and allowed the richer farmers to lease land and even to hire for wages the poorer farmers."⁴ This was indeed a major ideological concession. The problem was not only that the NEP was an ideological step backwards as argued by Trotsky, but it was not allowing for rapid enough industrialization. "The great equalitarian advance in land ownership...proved to be the greatest barrier to rapid industrialization by reducing the marketable agricultural surplus. This land reform had the further disadvantage of reducing the size of the average land holding to such an extent that it was unprofitable to buy and use efficiently more modern agricultural machinery."⁵

By 1927, Stalin had won the initial succession struggle and had firmly consolidated his power as the leader of the country and the Party. His first objective was to insure strength and military might. As the Soviet industrial base was small and rather technologically backward, the need for Western technology was an absolute necessity. To acquire this technology he would have to gain sufficient amounts of foreign exchange through exports to pay for it. In 1927, the only goods in the exportable category from the Soviet Union were primary products, specifically agricultural goods. With rapid industrialization as the main goal, and in particular heavy industry, Stalin's options were limited to ways in which to acquire the necessary agricultural surplus to pay for western technology. His decision to "collectivize," which began in earnest in the fall of 1929, was marked by a civil war in which large numbers of peasants were killed or exiled to

Siberia for resisting...Livestock were slaughtered by the farmers, and crop production fell...inspite of the lower total production, he (Stalin) greatly increased the amount of grain actually marketed and available for government use as capital.⁶ Obviously, there was reduced consumption throughout the country in order to sustain the high levels of investment (25 or 35 percent)⁷ in industrialization. Finally, as industry became stronger, the profits received from production were reinvested into the industry rather than passed on to the workers in the form of higher wages, again at the expense of reduced consumption although this time it was the urban worker who suffered.

It is significant that the Stalinist model for economic development has become the basis of legitimacy for each successive leadership of the Soviet Union. Upon Stalin's death, however, there was to appear the first in a series of declarations and pronouncements on behalf of the Soviet consumer goods industry. Georgi Malenkov was appointed as the Chairman of the Council of Ministers in addition to Premier of the Supreme Soviet directly following the death of Stalin in March, 1953. In August he was to launch a "concerted press campaign...on improving the quantity and quality of goods...Shortcomings were illuminated in considerable quantity, but no solution other than the typical Soviet exhortations were ventured in the press campaign."⁸ The obvious intent was to establish a broad popularity base from which Malenkov could launch himself firmly into the seat of unequalled power. Unfortunately

for Malenkov, he did not seem to fully appreciate the enormous success of heavy industry and the significance it held for the ruling elite. This success was apparent even outside of the Soviet Union. "...it is heavy industry that is the brightest side of the Soviet economic picture. Soviet heavy industry has set new production records annually every year for the last half decade or more."⁹ It should be remembered here that no bid for power in the Soviet Union has been successfully concluded without the full support of the military. Clearly the military could not support an economic policy contrary to its needs and interests, and as Harry Schwartz of the New York Times observed, "...the world situation worsened from the Soviet point of view during the last half of 1954, (and) the Malenkov policy came under ever sharpening attack from the Khrushchev forces, supported apparently by the military."¹⁰ The result was the subsequent ouster of Malenkov and the ascendancy of Khrushchev who was very much an advocate of heavy over light industry. He constantly harped on the theme that by raising industrial output it indicated the success of socialism over capitalism.¹¹

With Khrushchev's consolidation of power in 1957, the pattern of the Soviet domestic economic structure (Khrushchev to the contrary) was even further strengthened and this basic structure has remained to the present. The reasons for continuation are fairly basic. Governmental legitimacy in the Soviet Union depends on clear control of the party apparatus and the support of the major interest groups. As heavy

industrial formation expanded, the bureaucracy involved in controlling and managing it became increasingly powerful. The proliferation of the technocrats coupled with the always enormous military...industrial complex succeeded in continually reinforcing itself. The Cuban Missile Crisis only served to enhance the need for continued emphasis on industry and technology related to military strength. The successors to Khrushchev immediately set out to establish communist legitimacy and thereby their own position within the hierarchy. Although following the past trends of paying lip-service to an increase in the production of consumer goods, the force of Brezhnev's speech marking the 47th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1964 was clearly gauged to satisfy the powerful industrial interests while serving the additional purpose of instilling pride in the population and diverting interest from the consumer sector. "We have created mighty productive forces. Industrial and agricultural production continue to grow and the creation of the material and technical basis of Communism (a reference to the fact that they are not quite there yet) is proceeding successfully. The average annual growth in industrial output in the Soviet years has been 10%. This year we shall produce 85 million tons of steel...62 million tons of pig iron, 223 million tons of oil and 551 million tons of coal."¹² Finally, Brezhnev sets the stage for future growth and emphasis by resorting to a common theme in Soviet internal propaganda, "The policy of the imperialist powers has forced our country to concentrate efforts on

producing mighty nuclear missile armaments, a reliable guarantee of our security and of the security of our friends and allies."¹³

The Stalinist equation of heavy industrial emphasis to national (and therefore international) strength has continued to the present and has largely contributed both directly and indirectly to the situation now confronting the Soviet leadership. This emphasis coupled with the fantastically high production targets established by the succession of five year plans beginning in 1928 has resulted in the continued forced savings on the part of the Soviet worker and the loss of technological innovation at the expense of continued production.

THE FUTURE OF THE SOVIET ECONOMY

The Stalinist model that has been so closely adhered to, partially by design and partially by default, may have to be considerably modified in the 1980's. As Mark Miller points out, "The impressive growth rates of the Soviet economy have traditionally been sustained by ever larger inputs of labor and capital,"¹⁴ but the Soviet working age population will only increase by .5% in the early and mid-1980's.¹⁵ As a result, there will be an obvious need to increase productivity if the planned growth rates are to be met. However, if substantial increases in productivity are not achieved, the leadership, according to Dr. Holland Hunter, "...will have to find other ways to augment the scheduled increases...or settle for very low rates of growth."¹⁶ Dr. Hunter goes on

to say that there are several ways in which the working population may be expanded. One solution might be to reallocate employment from service to industry; another might be to raise the retirement age and attempt to recall large numbers of those already retired. Additionally, secondary school quotas could be reduced, releasing more potential employees for usage at the reverse end of the spectrum. Finally, and perhaps the most unsavory solution for the leadership would be the reduction or freezing of current military manpower levels.¹⁷ It is generally agreed however, that even if all of these measures are taken collectively the result would merely be a postponement of an inevitable drop in available manpower. I, for one, am extremely skeptical that any reduction or freeze of military strength could conceivably take place while Secretary Brezhnev and the present leadership is in power. This point is clearly underscored by the statement of Secretary Brezhnev at the 24th Party Congress in 1970 in which he reminded the delegates that it was because the highest priority was persistently accorded to heavy industry (defense related industry) that the Soviet Union was able "to end the centuries old backwardness" and transform itself into a mighty power. More specifically, Brezhnev went on to say that, "...without developing heavy industry we cannot maintain our defense capability at the level necessary to guarantee the country's security."¹⁸ Statements of this nature (added to the fact that when the 10th Five Year Plan was published in 1975 it was conceded that the proposed goal of

an increase in the consumer goods sector outlined in the Ninth Five Year Plan had not been met, and that a return to a favoring of heavy industry over the consumer sector was necessary), further serve to underscore both the power of the defense related interest groups and the economic fixation of the Soviet bureaucratic elite.¹⁹ With defense the stated rationale for the continued development of heavy industry, it does seem unlikely that the military will undergo any reductions in strength.

A second solution is to increase the productivity of those workers that are available, or more specifically to increase productivity through technological innovation. For a variety of reasons, this is a problem for the Soviets. In the first instance there is a general lack of incentive on the part of factory managerial personnel to suffer the production shutdown necessary for emplacement of advanced technological techniques. For most industry managers the pressure to meet production objectives is so great that they can little afford the short-term loss in output. Additionally, indigenous technological innovations have been severely handicapped by Communist Party doctrines which, "...has remained unwilling to let Soviet scientists participate freely in the reciprocal exchange and international communication that appear to be essential for genuinely creative work at the frontier of knowledge."²⁰

The third, and perhaps most obvious solution in some respects, is the importation of either vast quantities of

finished products from the West or the transfer of large amounts of advanced Western technology; in other words, an increase in the level of trade with the West. As Mr. Miller points out, the Soviets are extremely aware of the significance of both approaches and notes that Secretary Brezhnev has referred to foreign trade as a "big reserve" for Soviet economic development.²¹ Admittedly, there is a fair amount of controversy concerning the actual impact of Western technology on the Soviet economy but at least one study conducted by Donald Green and Herbert S. Levine of the University of Pennsylvania indicates that, "the net addition to output resulting from a unit increase in the stock of imported Western machinery in Soviet industry is 8 to 14 times the corresponding effect of a unit increase in the 'indigenous' capital stock."²² Although this is a little misleading in that imported technology makes up a very small fraction of the total Soviet output, the implications for future Soviet leaders are significant. However, there are indications that Soviet desires for "the latest" technology usually means, in practice, "the latest proven technology."²³ Again this reflects the need on the part of industrial managers to maximize production immediately to meet the demands of the Plan. As a result of this philosophy, it has been argued that technology transfers to the Soviet Union, particularly in those areas that are subject to rapid changes, have resulted not in a situation whereby the Soviets are overtaking the West but in which they are not even

able to effectively catch up.²⁴ Again, the implication for the Soviet leadership of the 1980's is ominous.

The second part of the problem affecting the need for increased trade with the West deals with the subject of payment. Additionally, this aspect is directly related to the Soviet Union's energy production. Soviet production of oil and gas has significantly increased since 1966 and, in fact, oil production alone has grown at a rate of 8.1% per year since 1960.²⁵ However, the CIA in 1977 predicted that because the Soviets had concentrated on production at the expense of exploration, they were rapidly approaching maximum output and could reach that point as early as 1978 but certainly not later than the early 1980's, after which, production would fall slightly.²⁶ Oil consumption has been increasing, although to date not as fast as production, therefore, allowing the Soviets to earn hard currency as a result of oil exports. The predicted fall in production will reverse this position, making it much more difficult to earn the much needed foreign exchange to pay for Western technology. A further constraint facing the Soviet leadership in this area, deals with the subject of energy conservation. Unlike the West, the majority of energy consumption is for industrial purposes and very little is a result of private use. Therefore, the energy conservation measures that are "easiest" to develop in the West to derive fairly dramatic gains, have a substantially reduced effect in the Soviet Union. Faced with these kinds of problems it is interesting to note what "solutions" have begun to

manifest themselves and it is also indicative of how the Soviet elite views not only its global status but additionally its domestic "class" security. As I mentioned earlier, the 10th Five Year Plan published in 1975 accepted a reduction in the consumer goods sector at the expense of a continued emphasis on heavy industry. Several weeks after the official announcement and after the government had admitted that it had not been able to meet the proposed production goals of consumer goods as outlined in the 9th Five Year Plan, a subdepartment head of Gosplan, the state economic planning agency, published an article attacking consumerism. In it he suggested that what was needed was a "strengthening of the socialist way of life" and a "consolidation of communist ideals" not an increase in consumer goods. Moreover, he maintained that the concept of "quality of life" was a capitalist invention designed to cover up difficulties and conflicts within Western economies.²⁷ Obviously, it appears that if cuts are going to be made to strengthen the Soviet hard currency position, it will come first in the sphere of the average citizen at the marketplace.

If, as I have attempted to point out, there is a definite real need for Western high technology particularly in the critical area of oil production, the Soviets must deal with the impending shortage in their present means of acquiring foreign exchange. Particularly if it is kept in mind that the Soviets have incurred a sizable debt and, "most hard currency earnings after 1980 will...have to be earmarked for debt repayment and service, leaving little for the purchase

of Western technology and grain."²⁸ In 1977, for instance, it was estimated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development that the debt owed to international banks and Western governments from the USSR and its Eastern bloc allies was about \$47 billion. The report went on to say that the majority of this debt was a direct result of an increase in the importation of sophisticated manufactured goods from the West; a difference of \$24 billion from 1976. The deficit, averaging about \$6 billion per year, was financed by loans that will come due, as Miller points out, in the early 1980's.²⁹

Assuming that the Soviet leadership elects to continue the "business-as-usual" approach that it has adopted thus far, and bearing in mind that it is generally conceded in the West and at least partially alluded to within the USSR that there is a very real need for Western technology, the question of options available becomes decidedly important.

Unlike 1928, the Soviet agricultural picture is bleak, and the USSR is in no position to realistically consider agricultural products as a source of foreign exchange. This is particularly true if one accepts the view held by the CIA that the unusually temperate winters of the past several years will return to more normal conditions adding to the already serious problems experienced by Soviet farming.³⁰ In fact, the situation takes on an even more critical dimension if the Soviets fall dramatically below the Plan goal and are forced to purchase grain from the U.S. and other Western producers in a period of reduced availability of hard currency. However,

there are most definitely alternative products, most primary, which include such items as wood, and related products, natural gas and a few others. The problem with many of these products, unfortunately, is that the situation may very well develop such that the USSR will be forced to divert trade from its Eastern bloc satellites to the West. This will undoubtedly cause hard feelings among those countries and only serve to exacerbate the growing problem of "Eurocommunism."

There is finally one area in which the Soviets may be able to earn large amounts of foreign exchange and at the same time enable them to continue the present emphasis on heavy industry; this area being arms sales. In my opinion, this prospect will have the most positive impact on the leadership and will fit nicely with Soviet expansionist foreign policy. The unfortunate aspect of this solution rests in the relative uncertainty of the prospective market, but I, for one, would look for an increased sales pitch in the Middle East in the very near future as a result of any rise in anti-American sentiment growing out of the Iranian crisis. This area is potentially one of the largest sources of foreign exchange available to them.

To recap briefly, the Soviet economic planners have historically been able to maintain enormously high levels of investment through forced savings imposed on the average consumer, and massive inputs of labor. Additionally, through long-term credits and a favorable accumulation of foreign exchange largely as a derivative of oil and gas exports, the

USSR has been able to acquire enough sophisticated Western technology to keep generally competitive in certain industries. This formula has worked with unquestionable success for the past 63 years of Soviet rule but has come under serious strains in the 1970's that foretell of potentially disastrous problems for the 1980's and beyond. The possible solutions to these problems are apparently unsavory to the present leadership to such an extent that they have elected to adopt a do-nothing policy, a quite rational decision for them given the political implications of any change in policy and the fact that they are all very old men who are unlikely to be in the position in the coming years of being forced to make the decision. The essence of the problem can best be summarized by a series of questions posed by the CIA.

The first concerns the ability of the military to accept a significant reduction in expenditures in accordance with the decline in economic growth. Given that this may not manifest itself until after Secretary Brezhnev (and very probably several others) have passed from the scene and bearing in mind the significant power of the military within the Soviet system, I do not expect any contender for power to select an option so obviously detrimental to his cause. Additionally, and as I have already alluded to, it is quite probable that in recent years the ministerial technocrats have supplanted the KGB as the third variable in the power lever equation involving the Party and the military. These individuals, among whom is the author of the anti-consumerism article mentioned

earlier, obviously would not consider it within their organizational interests to support any reduction in military expenditure. Finally, one of the traditional supports of legitimacy for any leadership structure since Lenin has been the constant display and reference to awesome military might.

Secondly, will the Soviet consumer accept a very modest increase, or perhaps even a decrease, in his still meager living standard? The response to this question must be answered in historical terms. The Soviet consumer has traditionally "suffered" in the overall quality of life sector and, at least in my opinion, it has become a part of his culture in much the same way that a television and two cars have become part of ours. Given the absolute control of the media as a second part of the culture, and, therefore, the ability to manipulate the population, outside stimuli will be applied in such a manner as to rally support for any policy. Finally, there are very few options available in the event the consumer is dissatisfied.

Probably the most difficult to answer, however, is the question concerning East European willingness to remain content with supplying the Soviets with their highest quality capital goods and consumer items in return for a declining supply of oil and gas? With the Czechoslovak intervention and the Brezhnev Doctrine so fresh in their mind, combined with the continued build-up of military forces within the Soviet Union, I can only suggest that they simply have no choice.

Clearly then, the reactionary policy shifts that have been indicative of past succession periods will not become an immediately operational facet of the new regime so far as economic reform is concerned. Perhaps Alec Nove summarizes it best when he states that, "unless one of Brezhnev's successors deliberately nails the flag of radical reform to his mast, the strong combination of state planners, ministerial officials, Central Committee and regional party officials, the military-industrial complex and the hardline ideologists will be much too powerful, and conservatism will win."³¹ Unfortunately, I would suggest that no successor would be capable, at least in the immediate future, of bringing about economic reform even if he did deliberately take that position. The most likely outcome of such a stance would be the rather swift removal of such an individual from contention.

VI. POST BREZHNEV CONTINGENCIES

"Soviet leaders do not fade away; they die in office,"¹ or so says Seweryn Bialer. But a review of the present Politburo is the best argument for supporting this statement.

Politburo Voting Members

Yu. V. Andropov	66	
L. I. Brezhnev	73	
K. U. Chernenko	69	
V. V. Grishin	66	
A. A. Gromyko	71	
A. P. Kirilenko	74	
A. N. Kosygin	76	
D. A. Kunayev	68	(This list represents
A. Ya. Pel'she	81	ages as they are or
G. V. Romanov	57	will be in calendar
V. V. Shcherbitskiy	62	year 1980)
M. A. Suslov	78	
N. A. Tikhonov	75	
O. F. Ustinov	72	

It is readily apparent from the above list that, with the sole exception of Romanov, and perhaps Shcherbitskiy, the remainder of the country's top leadership is far beyond retirement age. Additionally, the second echelon of Politburo membership, the non-voting members, does not constitute a fountain of youth by any means. There are, however, some significant exceptions to the age rule, particularly with respect to the November 1979 selection of Mikhail S. Gorbachev, age 49, as a non-voting member.

Politburo Non-Voting Members

G. A. Aliyev	56
P. N. Demichev	61
M. S. Gorbachev	48
V. V. Kuznetsov	78

P. N. Masherov	61
B. N. Ponomarev	74
S. R. Rashidov	62
E. A. Shevardnadze	51
M. S. Solomentsev	66

As Jerry Hough points out in his 1979 study, "Excluding Brezhnev, 50 percent of the voting Politburo members will be 70 years of age or older in 1979, and another 33 percent will be between 65 and 70. Yet, none has given any indication of a desire to retire."² So it would seem that at least half, and perhaps more, will not be among the active leaders of the country by 1985. This assessment is based solely on biological factors and not on political stimuli, although the combination certainly is a strong and undeniable undercurrent feeding the notion of major personnel changes in the near term. This is further strengthened when one considers Hough's conclusion that there has been "a gradual rejuvenation...among the regional party first secretaries."³ With leadership changes a very probable outcome in the near future, and given that there does not appear to be a likely successor, one must construct scenarios based on shakey speculation as to what individuals or factions will forge the Soviet policies of the 1980's and beyond.

First, and perhaps to stress the precariousness of the present situation, it is important to consider the position of the present primus inter pares, Brezhnev. As Bialer describes him, Brezhnev is, "An old man and, according to numerous reliable reports, a very sick man, he has already relinquished major portions of duties to associates. He works at reduced

pace and energy: he exhibits no interest other than to preside over a very stable regime and to try to carry out well-established, if sometimes contradictory, policies."⁴ Some reports have him only working about four hours a day and, following the invasion of Afghanistan rumors circulated suggesting that he was not even present during the meeting that finalized that decision. Although this may serve to highlight the present transitory nature of Brezhnev, the rumor is highly unlikely when considered in light of his strong performance at the November Central Committee Plenum and his subsequent activities. It would appear that while he may be old and in poor health, he has clearly maintained his position within the leadership. How long this situation can or will last remains to be seen, but it may very well be that the succession process has already begun.

Within the present hierarchy, there is a generally accepted scenario that solves the problem of Brezhnev's passing by way of death, in the near future. This scenario surrounds the present party secretary for organizational affairs, Andrei Kirilenko. Several sources have indicated that Kirilenko is a likely candidate and recent evidence certainly supports this possibility. The keynote speech at the 62nd Anniversary of the revolution in November 1979 was given by Kirilenko⁵ and it was him who led the welcoming delegation for the visiting leaders of the Nicaraguan government in March of this year.⁶ Additionally, Kirilenko spoke for the Kremlin at the March 1980 meeting of the Hungarian Communist Party in Budapest.⁷

Further, Myron Rush points out that, "Kirilenko is the only senior figure who is a member of both the Politburo and the Secretariat, and he is also ambitious and relatively vigorous."⁸ Finally, he has been politically astute enough to avoid any policies or programs which would serve to alienate him from those powerful interest groups which I have mentioned earlier. In his 1980 Republic Supreme Soviet election campaign speeches he, "displayed his characteristic bias toward heavy industry (but) avoided use of language denoting controversy"⁹ such as the "leading role" of heavy industry or "preferential" development of consumer goods. However, along with Suslov, he made the strongest statements concerning the continuation of high defense spending by saying, "we are strengthening and will continue to strengthen" Soviet defenses.¹⁰

The problem with Kirilenko, however, is twofold. First, and foremost, is the question of his age. At this writing, he is 73 and although he is "relatively vigorous" as Rush suggests, it is difficult to visualize him as having the time in which to consolidate his position, particularly in lieu of the other variables operating within the party and Soviet society as a whole. Secondly, although one does not know for sure, Kirilenko has traditionally been associated as a protege of Brezhnev and, therefore, the linkage may prove an insurmountable liability with Brezhnev's departure. In any case, I am forced to agree with William Hyland's assessment that, "It is difficult to visualize him as the leader for more than

a few years."¹¹ More specifically, I would put his term of office, assuming he is elected to the position of General Secretary, at no more than two years and probably less.

There is a second likely candidate, K.U. Chernenko, who has been named as a possible interim successor but who has also been labeled as a Brezhnev protege. Although attempts appear to have been made to downgrade his position within the leadership (in 1979 he had been scheduled in the fifth most prestigious position in the delivering of Supreme Soviet election speeches, whereas in 1980, Gromyko and Kunayev were placed in front of him moving him to seventh position),¹² most sources still rank him as a potential successor. Unfortunately for Chernenko, it appears as though he has become associated with the moderate faction within the Politburo and has counseled moderation in foreign policy. As one source reports concerning speeches addressed to the Soviet Republican legislatures, "Equally interesting was (Brezhnev's) protege Konstantin Cherenko's suggestion that things might be worse if Soviet hotheads had their way. 'In the present difficult situation, it is important to maintain a steady and cool head,' he said. 'Aggressive forces would like very much to provoke us into retaliatory toughness.' He meant aggressive forces in the West, but domestic implications were also clear."¹³ I refer to this situation as unfortunate because his stance appears to place him in opposition to those forces that currently possess the most influence. The result seems to be that Chernenko, without Brezhnev, has no base from

which to launch his bid and must surely lose in a struggle with a so-called "hardline" opponent.

To be sure, there are others within the Politburo membership who represent potential successors to Brezhnev, and not simply in the short run. Vladimir V. Shcherbitsky is young enough, 62 years old at this writing, but he has the decided disadvantage of being a non-Russian (10 of 14 Politburo members are Russian). Combine this with his lack of a secure base within the central hierarchy and his credibility rapidly deteriorates. But perhaps the most significant of the younger members of the Politburo is Leningrad Party Chief, Grigory V. Romanov, 57. Unfortunately, it is precisely because he is so much younger than his colleagues that he may be denied the top position. As in the past, the most dynamic and likely candidate may represent a cause for alarm within the ruling elite, thus unifying them against him. In the case of Romanov, his extraordinary selection for Politburo membership in March, 1976 caused many to speculate that he was on his way up and even to figure him as a possible successor to Brezhnev.¹⁴ However, it was generally conceded that although he was clearly on his way up, he would have to move to Moscow and acquire the necessary political connections and support in that city before he could seriously be considered as a potential general secretary. Four years later Romanov is still in Leningrad. Should Brezhnev die within the next few months, Romanov would have to move quickly to Moscow to begin the campaigning necessary to secure his position. Based on

traditional historical factors, however, I see both his move to Moscow and any subsequent attempt to secure the top position as unlikely. His well publicized potential, his age, and his personal demeanor,¹⁵ coupled with a dramatic move to Moscow may very well prove so threatening to other, more securely based Politburo members, that he may, in fact, face a radical reversal of his political fortunes.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, it appears as though he has become associated with some form of economic reform that may place him at odds with the defense related interest groups. In a Supreme Soviet election campaign speech of 7 February, Romanov listed "the need to divert significant funds to defense needs among several reasons for the failure of the Soviet economy to expand at a greater rate in recent years."¹⁶ He has always been associated, at least in the western press, as being supportive of economic reform and decentralization and this characteristic may likely prove to be among his liabilities.

All of this is not to say that there is a total lack of potential long-term successors within the 50 to 60 year old age group. In general, the data is extremely scanty with regard to any individuals not part of the Politburo, but at least two names have appeared in the literature that have significant possibilities.

There is, to be sure, a second political organ within the Party hierarchy which has traditionally been associated with the reins of power. This organ, the Central Committee

Secretariat, provides an ambitious individual the vehicle to acquire the necessary political currency to realistically purchase a seat at the pinnacle of power. If, for example, Romanov was to be appointed the Party Secretary for Defense Industry, his position within the leadership would be enormously enhanced. There are/were two individuals whose status within the secretariat, combined with their age and apparent past performance placed them in the position of men on the way up. These two were singled out by Dmitri Simes in his 1979 study. "Due to such factors as age or career handicaps, only three of the secretaries have a good chance for further promotion. Two--Yakov P. Ryabov, and Vladimir I. Dolgikh,... are respectively in charge of the defense and heavy industries..."¹⁷ (the third is Mikhail V. Zimyanin who is 66 and a Byelorussian). The latter of the two, Dolgikh, represents what appears to be an excellent example of the "new class" of Soviet officialdom. That he has been singled out by several scholars as a man to watch is underlined by statements made by T.H. Rigby and Grey Hodnett. Rigby has this to say, "Brezhnev's appointment...of V.I. Dolgikh as first secretary of the Krasnoyarsk Kraikom in 1969 (is) an example of unusually rapid promotion, and (he) soon moved on to (a) more senior position in the Central Committee Secretariat."¹⁸ Hodnett, in referring to Dolgikh, stated that, Dolgikh's most distinctive attributes are his strong Siberian roots, graduate level education, and extensive leadership experience at the important

Norilsk Mining-Metalurgical Combine. Dolgikh moved directly from the directorship of the Combine to the First Secretary of the Party Committee of Krasnoiarsky Kray in April 1969--the only party (or indeed political) job he ever held before being elevated to the Secretariat.¹⁹ If Dolgikh is ambitious, and his background suggests that he is, his job within the Secretariat may have enabled him to acquire valuable connections within the powerful military-industrial complex. Although his absence from the Politburo takes him out of immediate contention for the position of General Secretary, a move to that body following the death of Brezhnev and (or) several others would make him a very powerful possibility. That Dolgikh's political fortunes have continued to rise in recent months is stressed by the fact that in early May of this year (1980) the critical new plan surrounding the oil intensification drive in Siberia was placed under his direction.²⁰ If he should be successful and make significant progress toward raising oil production, his credibility will be enormously enhanced. His only liability may come as a result of his inability to appear politically conservative enough during the initial period of the power struggle. Should he make a dramatic move too soon, he will unite his colleagues against him and he will fail.

Yakov P. Ryabov, now 52, was formerly a member of the secretariat until his move to the government structure in February, 1979. The key element surrounding his potential is not merely the fact that he is a career party apparatchik who

as Simes points out, rose "through the ranks of the Sverdlosk party machine,"²¹ but also the fact that his job within the Secretariat placed him in charge of defense industries. Thus he, too, has been able to forge potentially favorable connections within that powerful interest group. However, his removal from the Secretariat and appointment as First Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Committee has been taken by some as a step down.²² Although any break from a direct link with the party certainly cannot strengthen one's political power, it must be kept in mind that Brezhnev suffered a similar, albeit more prestigious, fate in 1961. Additionally, it was reported at the time that Ryabov had been placed in the position as a "trouble-shooter" in that there was a "necessity of further strengthening the key economic agency."²³ If Ryabov is elevated to the Politburo but remains in the governmental bureaucracy it should be kept in mind that, as I mentioned earlier, the new constitution places the military under state rather than party, supervision. If Ryabov's connections are significant as a result of his time as defense industries chief, he could become a formidable opponent. To be sure, there are some who maintain that the government is less a factor in the future power struggle than it was following the death of Stalin. "The Soviet government...is a weak base from which to attempt to gain supreme power...(It) seems less likely to play a major role in the post-Brezhnev settlement than was the case in 1953-55. This is because in recent years Party intervention in the execution of policy by the government

has become more blatant.²⁴ Ryabov is a party apparatchik, however, and it would seem that if he is not forced to remain for an extended period as a member of the governmental structure, the experience he gains may be extremely significant.

The picture that develops as a result of the scanty evidence that is available suggests a form of systemic arterioscleroses that is the product of longterm trends within Soviet society. Certainly this is not to say that these trends have resulted in a permanent gerontocratic political structure that is so firmly established as to preclude the emergence of massive dynamic changes. In fact, historical evidence seems to support the thesis that new Soviet regimes are characteristically associated with policy shifts that are radically different than those pursued by previous leaders. Indications are that the post-Brezhnev period will be no different. Unfortunately, what the Brezhnev period has been associated with, particularly on the domestic front, is stability, conservatism and lack of intiative. Seweryn Bialer sums it up rather nicely by stating, "One has the definite impression that Soviet policies in the last five years have been characterized by drift, that the Brezhnev leadership has settled into an ossified mode of continuity, of middle-of-the-road responsiveness to diverse elite pressure, with no major initiatives of its own."²⁵ That Bialer wrote that prior to the Afghanistan invasion highlights the possibility that the succession struggle may already have begun and that the domestic conservation of the 1970's has led to an increase of

international adventurism in the 1980's. The Czechoslovak intervention came at a time when Brezhnev was not clearly primus inter pares and, therefore, could ill afford an open break with the powerful military constituency. In 1980, there is at least outwardly no question as to who is in control, but western analysts have been greatly fooled before. Recent evidence points toward an inexplicable shift in the profile of the Soviet leadership which tends to support the notion that pressure is being brought to bear from some quarter. One source reported that the shake-up of the technology branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in the wake of Sakharov's removal, "stands for the further hardening of the regime..."²⁶ Additionally, George Kennan recently speculated that there has been a "breakthrough to positions of dominant influence of hardline elements much less concerned with world public opinion but also much less experienced than these (two) older figures."²⁷ (Brezhnev and Kosygin). The identity of these "hardline elements" remains somewhat a mystery although many suspect such individuals as Suslov, Ustinov, Marshal Kulikov and Adm. Gorshkov. However, these men can hardly be called inexperienced and I suspect they represent only the fountainhead of the pressures operational within the organizations they head or constituencies they represent. The military, as was pointed out, has undergone an enormous rejuvenation, and the "new class" of officer may have reached a point where his voice is being heard. In a recent interview, Walter Connor described those younger members of the Soviet elite with whom he had come in

contact as being very self assured, cosmopolitan and in some ways arrogant. It is these individuals who will take over from the caretaker regime, the most likely circumstance were Brezhnev to die within the next few months to a year. Perhaps men such as Ryabov, Dolgikh and Romanov represent the new wave and as such suggest a strengthening of the ties with the military-industrial complex. They will inherit a powerful military force, virtually unrivaled by any other force on earth. Should Afghanistan be smoothly and efficiently quieted, as recent reports seem to indicate, then in the words of William Hyland, "...when the Brezhnev group retires from the scene, it may be succeeded by people who see interventionism as the norm, who believe that the Soviet Union can intervene in ways that earlier appeared quite risky indeed."²⁸

Most of all, it would appear that the initial conservatism, an essential period during which the new leader forges new and stronger links with the most powerful and dangerous groups, will be followed by "a period of innovation and experimentation."²⁹ The content of this experimentation can only be the result of pure speculation but, one cannot deny that growing military strength, the emerging characteristics of the "new class," and recent policy trends at a time when Brezhnev's control is at least partially questionable, posit some indication concerning future Soviet initiatives.

VII. IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. STRATEGY

As we have seen from the preceding chapters, the Soviet sub-elite is becoming a great deal more professional in terms of their education and job orientation. Gone is the need to be a great and inspired communist able to interpret Marxism-Leninism with a clarity unrivaled by other mere mortals. The new Soviet man is much more pragmatic, much more practical. He is just as competitive as always but sees not an ideological competition but one centered on power. He is, to be sure, more professional in some ways, and a great deal less in others. His rise within the bureaucracy has been relatively circumscribed by the needs of the system, resulting in an enormous deficit in practical foreign policy experience. This situation is even further exacerbated by the closed nature of Soviet society. When the caretaker regime, headed by those members of the older generation to whom the reins of power will initially be entrusted, itself passes from the scene, the world will be confronted by perhaps the most inexperienced foreign policy-makers ever to control a global power. The result could very well be the most alarming threat to U.S. survival ever contemplated. However, that period during which Soviet interests may be reflected inward as a result of the inevitable struggle for supremacy, offers a unique opportunity for U.S. initiatives to perhaps effect the outcome of the struggle or, failing that, to "educate" the new class of Soviet

leader on all the ramifications of international relations.

As T.H. Rigby suggests, "...it can be shown historically that at times when the Soviet leadership has been an oligarchy without one member clearly dominant over the others, policymaking has tended to be slow, indecisive and contradictory."¹ If one accepts the premise that an internationally threatening and aggressive Soviet Union is incompatible to a stable world order as defined by U.S. values and that this situation endangers the very survival of the republic in its present form, then composition and perceptions of future Soviet leadership is of primary national concern. With this in mind, a systematic evaluation of contemporary Soviet diplomacy may yield valuable insight into what tactics may be useful in the future. Additionally, lessons drawn from previous mistakes, both Soviet and U.S., may very well be applicable to future diplomatic interactions.

While it may be true that the "new Soviet elite" differs significantly from the septogenarians presently in power, there are certain characteristic Soviet diplomatic variables that will continue for some time.

Diplomacy and negotiations are effective instruments in seeking international accommodation and stability, but the central element that determines their effectiveness is the existing balance of power. For the reality of power is the first principle in relations between nations, and diplomacy is but a reflection of that reality. Leverage is the vital element in negotiations, and power the fulcrum upon which it rests.

The Soviets have a traditional respect for power, and the principle upon which Soviet foreign policy is based is a power principle; namely,

the correlation of forces, or in Western terms, the balance of power.²

Specifically with regard to the new generation of Soviet leadership, Dimitri Simes had this to say concerning power as a foreign policy variable. "They (the new generation) know the reality of Soviet power as they are now experiencing it. But they take a more pragmatic, power-oriented look at international relations; they are less ideological in approach. They see the United States more as a rival superpower..."³ What is disconcerting about this analysis is the self-assurance on the part of the new generation that they "know" what Soviet power represents. The problem, particularly for the United States, is that Soviet power is not only a factor of its own quantity and quality, but it is this as a perception of its relation to the United States. Should the perception of strength outstrip the reality, the danger of miscalculation is significantly enhanced. Again, in terms of our most vital interest, that of survival, U.S. strength must be clearly understood. This is even further underlined when one considers that, as Joseph Whelan states, "Implied in this respect for power, applicable at all levels of negotiations, is recognition of its leverage as a central element in any negotiations. Also, implied is Soviet disdain for weakness and uncertainty."⁴

It might be well to consider here that when the present leadership assumed control of the Soviet Union, the power equation between the two states, U.S.-U.S.S.R., was considerably

different. That U.S. response to Soviet foreign policy initiatives was a primary concern during the early part of the present regime has been clearly documented.⁵ The situation in the next decade, when the new generation is resolving the leadership problem, is considerably different. From the early 1970's, Brezhnev and others of the leadership have constantly reiterated the thesis that there has been a fundamental shift in the correlation of forces in favor of the socialist camp. Given the restricted nature of the flow of information within the society, there can be little doubt as to the impact this repetition has had on the potential successors. Additionally, the Soviets have apparently developed a rather simple definition for determining the nature of the power equation. According to Whelan, "The vital center (of Soviet diplomacy) is a determination of what they call, 'the correlation of forces-' meaning not just military power, but the total aggregate of power: military, political, economic and social. Paramount, however, is the amassing of military power."⁶ As we have seen, the military is an important variable on the Soviet domestic political scene and, therefore, it may be safe to extrapolate that influence to foreign policy-making. The importance of this influence is underscored not only by the apparent increase in the potential for a marriage of interests between the two most powerful groups, the party and the military, in the upcoming succession, but by traditional Russian fears that make this marriage all the more dangerous. As General Samuel Wilson, former head of the

Defense Intelligence Agency and a specialist in Soviet affairs who had extensive tours of duty in Moscow, states, "the Soviets will never feel comfortable until they have a ratio in strength of 7 or 8:1. They might relax," he said, "if it were 15:1."⁷ Further, as William Husband emphatically states, "Reduced to barest essentials, the Soviet's perceive positions-of-strength as 'positions-of-superior-strength.'⁸ For our part, superior strength implies a degree of danger to our continued present existence so intense that such an imbalance would be tantamount to a withdrawal from the competition.

A second characteristic which may very likely continue into the next generation of Soviet leadership concerns a communist repugnance for a very American political tool, compromise. This characteristic is perhaps best described by John Wadsworth in his 1962 study. "To a Western nation, the basic purpose is to reach an agreement by compromise. To Communists, at least to date, negotiation is part of a grand strategy aimed at the eventual total defeat of the other side. They may negotiate with no intention whatever of reaching agreement except on their proposals."⁹ This may be more easily understood by considering the historical and geographical variables that have molded the Russian psyche. These variables and their impact led George Kennan to surmise that the Russians, "have no concept of permanent friendly relations between states...For them, all foreigners are potential enemies."¹⁰ What is important to remember is that, although communist ideology has perhaps become less of an active political

variable within Soviet society- it still remains the only form of legitimization for the regime. Therefore, when combined with the xenophobic nature described above, it is impossible to foresee a "live-and-let-live" international situation arising from the new leadership.

In a purely practical sense then, one can expect the next generation of Soviet leaders to use those diplomatic tools which offer the highest returns and which, just as productive technology, represent the latest proven capability. With this in mind it may do well to consider those tools which have recently worked so well.

In the 1977 Soviet publication, A Short Dictionary-Reference Book for Agitators and Political Information Officers, a basic ideological concept, peaceful coexistence, is defined. In this definition specific reference is made to communist interaction with other social systems and it is extremely important for U.S. interests not to overlook the significance of this definition. In part it states that, "Peaceful coexistence does not extend to the class (struggle), and consequently, (does not) extend to the ideological struggle of the two systems. In the struggle of the two world views (communism and capitalism) there cannot be a place for neutralism and compromise."¹¹ Additionally, the basic restatement of the principle of peaceful coexistence by the present Soviet leadership is contained in the "Thesis of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party" published December 23, 1969. In part it stated:

Lenin pointed out (that) peaceful coexistence between states with differing social systems presupposes an acute political, economic and ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism, between the working class and bourgeoisie. Peaceful coexistence has nothing in common with class peace and does not cast even the slightest doubt upon the oppressed peoples' sacred right to use all means, including armed struggle, in the cause of their liberation.¹²

From the standpoint of our very survival, it seems clearly essential that we understand the definition and establish a coherent ideological platform of our own. Perhaps Graham Vernon summarizes it best when he states,

Far better, it would seem, if the United States were to understand peaceful coexistence as the Soviets do: as a possible means of averting nuclear war. Such an understanding, however, must not be allowed to obscure the fact that the Soviet Union is fundamentally hostile to the United States, and that a return to the open hostility of the Cold War is better than risking the security of the United States through disadvantageous agreements. Peaceful co-existence is not friendship.¹³

It is precisely because there is an apparent lack on the part of many Western leaders to fully appreciate the Soviet definition of the term that this policy has been so successful in the past and can therefore be expected to be vigorously pursued in the future. In the zero-sum game of the Soviet political scene, anything that can be successfully used to lull an opponent into a lack of vigilance will be utilized.

The second diplomatic tool that has been successfully used, particularly by Brezhnev, is that of detente. Again, the definition presented in the 1977 Soviet agitator's dictionary is important to consider. "(Detente) is connected first of

all with the changes in the correlation of forces in the world in favor of communism. Detente is a result of the steady increase in the strength and power of socialism, (of) the growth of its influence and authority in the international arena.¹⁴ The fact that this theme has been constantly repeated in Soviet literature and speeches throughout the past decade has unquestionably had an influence in the Soviet sub-elite. The exact manifestation that this influence will take cannot yet be known for certain but if one is told that the correlation of forces has changed in one's favor, it would indeed be unrealistic to consider any reversal in those forces--particularly during the course of a struggle for internal power supremacy.

In 1974, Secretary of State Kissinger suggested four principles to guide the course of the United States along the detente path. To be sure, there appear to be fundamental differences in the approach taken by Dr. Kissinger and that of the Soviet dictionary.

First, Dr. Kissinger maintains that, "if detente is to endure, both sides must benefit."¹⁵ From what has been presented concerning Soviet abilities to compromise and the general Soviet paranoia surrounding relations with foreign countries, it seems unlikely that they would be willing to see any benefit accrue to their foremost rival. As in Soviet domestic struggles, the greatest threat must be crushed. There is no evidence to suggest that this will not continue in the future.

Dr. Kissinger went on to say that building a new relationship with the Soviet Union does not entail any devaluation of traditional alliance relationships and that the emergence of more normal relations with the USSR must not undermine our resolve to maintain our national defense. Six years later it would seem fairly clear that those principles have indeed been violated. The strongest evidence to support that thesis ironically comes from the Soviets who, in recent months, have steadfastly maintained that detente may be salvaged, and seem quite sincere in this advocacy.¹⁶ To be sure, there is, according to Robert Conquest, a simple and rather straightforward reason as to why the Soviets, at least the present regime, favor detente. "The reason that Brezhnev and the rest of them are happy with detente is because they are getting everything they want without having to pursue a 'hard' policy."¹⁷ The question, of course, is whether the sub-elite appreciate the gains that detente has obtained for the Soviet Union. If, as I have suggested, there is a growing pragmatism and bureaucratic professionalism among this group combined with a general lack of experience in foreign affairs, the chances are that detente will not be a favorable policy. This is particularly so during the period in which the new leader is attempting to forge close political ties with the powerful interest groups. Self-assuredness and inexperience will very likely prove to be an extremely dangerous combination. As William Hyland suggests, "The new leaders might take the harder course if by then they have managed to shake the sense of historical

inferiority resulting from the experience of the 1930's and the war. And some of these people probably have not acquired the temperance and prudence that Brezhnev and Kosygin learned through experience.¹⁸ Perhaps Afghanistan is a direct result of the self-assurance aspect.

NUCLEAR WAR AND THE PROJECTION OF POWER

If, as I have attempted to show earlier, there is a convergence of views among both the present leadership and the military and the emerging sub-elite and the military, it is of particular interest for the United States to understand the thrust of these views.

Specifically, although the Soviets are by no means anxious to engage in a nuclear war, they do not reject the idea of such a war nor the use of nuclear weapons. In a November 1975 article published in the Soviet journal Communist of the Armed Forces, the following was stated:

The premise of Marxism-Leninism on war as a continuation of policy by military means remains true in an atmosphere of fundamental changes in military matters. The attempt of certain bourgeois ideologists to prove that nuclear missile weapons lead war outside the framework of policy and that nuclear war moves beyond the control of policy, ceases to be an instrument of policy and does not constitute its continuation is theoretically incorrect and politically reactionary.... The description of the correlation between war and policy is fully valid for the use of weapons of mass destruction. Far from leading to a lessening of the role of policy in waging war, the tremendous might of the means of destruction leads to the raising of that role. After all, immeasurably more effective means of struggle are now at the direct disposal of state power.¹⁹

Additionally, with regard to the use of theater nuclear weapons, Soviet military doctrine states that, "the main purpose of offensive combat is the complete destruction of a defending enemy, and will now be achieved, first of all, by strikes of nuclear weapons...."²⁰ (It might also be significant to note here that the Soviets state, "offensive operations in a future war will be the basic means for solving the problems of armed conflict...."²¹) This strategy and Soviet civil defense preparations based on the premise that, "The events of the past few years have clearly shown that the imperialist camp, led by the United States of America, is preparing to commit a most dangerous crime against humanity--a world war using weapons of mass destruction,"²² clearly are inconsistent with our own worldview.

However, not only is Soviet military strategy offensively oriented, this aggressiveness has carried over to the diplomatic sphere. As F.D. Kohler states, "By 1969, Foreign Minister Gromyko was authorized to state the basic thesis; 'The Soviet Union, which, as a large world power, has widely developed international connections, cannot take a passive attitude toward those events that might be territorially remote but that touch on our security and also on the security of our friends...'"²³ One year later, on March 14, 1970, Brezhnev was to further state, "At the present time no question of any importance in the world can be solved without our participation, without taking into account our economic and

military might."²⁴ The decade of the 1970's saw a massive increase in both the Soviet military establishment and the projection of that establishment on a global basis in connection with the above thesis. That this projection of power was conducted with relative immunity can hardly have been lost on the emerging new generation of Soviet bureaucrats.

THE FUTURE OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

By this point it should be clear that the Soviets are fierce and aggressive competitors whose stated goals and objectives seem clearly bent on the domination of all other political entities. Detente and peaceful coexistence are simply the present means by which the Soviets avoid nuclear war and by which they have been able to lull the West into a misplaced sense of security. In the years ahead, the Soviet Union will be forced to devote a portion of its energies inward in an attempt to resolve the inevitable problems associated with the establishment of a new elite. Traditionally, this inward reflection has been associated with a general hardening of policy in an attempt to win the support of strong conservative interest groups.

It is therefore absolutely essential to the long-term survival of the United States that a coherent policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union be developed. This policy, or strategy, must be all-encompassing and not simply one aimed at correcting the imbalance in the military arena. Just as the Soviets have displayed a willingness to compete in an entire spectrum of

areas from ideological to economic, our policy should also be designed to extend into a variety of areas. American strategy should not, however, be restricted to merely those areas specifically in jeopardy as a direct result of Soviet capabilities, but should extend beyond to areas of specific interest to American values and goals.

The danger lies in the question of the collective, competitive will. Where the political cost of direct and tangible action on the part of the U.S. is in question, the problem of will becomes more complex and more critical. Regarding Vietnam, William and Harriet Scott make the following assessment:

Vietnam was a watershed for the Soviet Union. The victory of the North Vietnamese encouraged the Soviets to believe that the Western democracies lack the will to stop so-called national liberation movements, especially those backed by the USSR and the socialist community.²⁵

In 1976, in Angola, the Soviets were further encouraged.²⁶ The critical problem is one of training or conditioning, particularly on the Soviet sub-elite. As Leopold Labedz suggests, "(the next Soviet leadership) may well hope that by using its increased might it can achieve further political and strategic advances, if the Western powers continue to display cowardice and confusion."²⁷

Perhaps one of the best lessons of recent times on how to effectively deal with the Soviets comes from the personal recollections of former President Nixon and William Safire. According to Safire, "Nixon's way was to appear rigid..." during the conduct of negotiations and he specifically made a

point of insuring that the Soviets were informed of his reputation. "I have the reputation of being a hard-line anti-communist," he said at one of his first Kremlin meetings to which Kosygin, "who was created to exemplify the adjective 'dour', cracked his first thin smile of the summit and replied, 'We know, we know.'"²⁸ The fact is that they did know, from long experience, just exactly where Nixon stood and this knowledge helped to reduce the significance of traditional Russian paranoia.

The lesson to be learned, however, is not so much the effectiveness of Nixon's style, but the fact that he represented a known quantity with whom the Soviets had been dealing for some time. (The famous "kitchen debate" had taken place 13 years earlier, in July, 1959.) Continuity and straightforwardness clearly appear to be important attributes of any strategy contemplated. These two characteristics should perhaps also be accompanied by clarity, specifically with regard to the definition of terms. We have already seen what problems can arise out of such unclear phrases as "peaceful co-existence" and "detente".

This is not to suggest that American presidents be elected for ten or fifteen years in order to achieve a continuity vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. There are however alternatives that, if initiated now, would serve to reduce the problems of communicating with the Soviets in the future. Specifically in the diplomatic realm, Marshall Brement makes the following suggestions:

- 1) Appoint one official within the State Department to oversee all aspects of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. relationship, i.e., an Undersecretary of State for Strategic and Soviet Affairs.
- 2) Create a State Department bureau for Soviet and East European Affairs.
- 3) Develop a corps of arms control experts with Soviet experience.
- 4) Keep our embassy in Moscow fully informed on key issues.
- 5) Improve recruitment and training of Soviet specialists.²⁹

The essence of his list is to establish and maintain professionalism, expertise and continuity. If a permanent corps of Soviet specialists could be recruited and trained and then used, there clearly would exist a possibility for establishing a more meaningful dialogue with the Soviets in that the fear of the unknown could conceivably be reduced for them. Additionally, this corps could serve the additional function of interpreting Soviet policies and programs. Presently this function is being performed by a series of academicians whose views are as varied as the institutions from which they come. They are additionally handicapped by their disassociation with not only the U.S. government but by a lack of constant interaction on a personal level with Soviet governmental personnel. There is, in fact, a general lack of organization on the part of the government in its dealings with the most significant threat to national survival that presently exists.

In terms of our national survival, which is perhaps the most important generally agreed upon national interest within the United States, the Soviet Union presently represents the single most dangerous external threat. Although, as William

Hyland suggests, "it is preferable to sort the problems out now and find out what we are dealing with rather than to assume that we will be in a better position later because the Soviets will be in the midst of a succession crisis,"³⁰ the fact remains that we are in a succession crisis of our own that precludes any bold new initiative for the immediate future. It is also unlikely that the present Soviet leadership will be obliging enough to survive long enough for us to resolve the issue completely. U.S. presidents, as well as Soviet General Secretaries, require a certain amount of time to consolidate their positions. The key therefore lies in acknowledgment of the threat and the establishment of a continuing link not only in terms of the new Soviet leadership, but within our own governmental system.

As I have indicated, there is mounting evidence to suggest that the next generation of Soviet leaders will not be more conciliatory in its relation with the West. Our policies therefore should reflect a careful and educated amount of this evidence. Perhaps the operating code of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow during the mid-1980's is and will be the best solution. "Firm, patient, persistent, polite."³¹ In any event, it is important to recall that recent words of Soviet leader Brezhnev, "the entire accumulated experience, the...international situation, particularly the facts of the recent time, prompt us ot keep our powder dry."³²

CONCLUSION

While no study can predict the future, certain historical trends can be identified to reduce the risk of U.S. misperceptions and miscalculations during the upcoming Soviet leadership transition. Historically, Russian political systems have been conservative, and the present Soviet circumstances serve only to underline this fact. Traditional Russian power variables have remained unchanged, with the one outstanding difference being the existence of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Under present circumstances, any aspirant to the position of General Secretary of the CPSU must have the support of the Party as a power base before he can reasonably be considered. To achieve credibility he must have performed well at as many of the levels of the Party hierarchy as possible. It is this background that constitutes both credibility in the eyes of the rank and file party membership and the beginnings of a political power base from which to launch a bid for supreme power.

As in medieval Muscovy with the existence of the Streltzy the military continues to be an extremely important political factor. The present regime has, in fact, steadily improved the position of this interest group, serving to further enhance its importance in the upcoming succession struggle. Close ties with this powerful group are absolutely essential. Failure to maintain close ties with the military, poor relations

with the military, or merely a moderate change in the military's status quo has proven politically fatal in the past. Any potential General Secretary must have the continued support of the military in order to gain and maintain power.

The heavy industrial technocrats constitute an equally important political interest group. This group, in contrast to the "Russian" tradition, has become a "traditional" Soviet power lever which must be considered. Heavy industry, clearly the most successful aspect of the Soviet economy, continues to attract the most ambitious and capable people within the Soviet political system. These individuals have been groomed for an entire generation to expect preferred treatment from the government. As in the case of the military, any change in the status quo would be intolerable and could not be supported. As Malenkov discovered, the Soviet consumer does not constitute a political force within Soviet society. Support of the consumer through the reallocation of resources to light industry only serves to antagonize two of the three most powerful Soviet interest groups; the military and the technocrats. Further, it must be remembered that the most powerful Party bureaucrats have, for several years, been heavily associated with these groups.

The result is that, as in any large bureaucracy, criteria emerge by which ambitious individuals gauge their progress to the highest rungs of the ladder. These criteria are continually reinforced by the successes of those who have taken

the "proven" path. In the modern Soviet society, there most definitely exist such criteria. While certain variables such as ideology have lost some of their former significance, the more traditional power supports have remained. As the present generation of leaders passes from the scene, these "modern Soviet men" intensively educated in technical matters, closely associated with heavy industry and defense interests, and experienced in Party administration--will take charge. The transition will probably be slow, methodical, and conservative, lacking any spark of dynamism. It will be marked by the continued support of the powerful interest groups which have become historically essential. The average citizen, worker, consumer and non-party member will have absolutely no input on the transition. The maturity of the Soviet governmental system, particularly under the Brezhnev regime, has only served to ensure a continuation of the status quo. Dramatic change will only come as a result of catastrophic and improbable events--both internal and external--such as those that existed in the years immediately preceding 1917. Nonetheless, U.S. strategic planning must take account of the probable characteristics of the new generation of Soviet leaders.

FOOTNOTES

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